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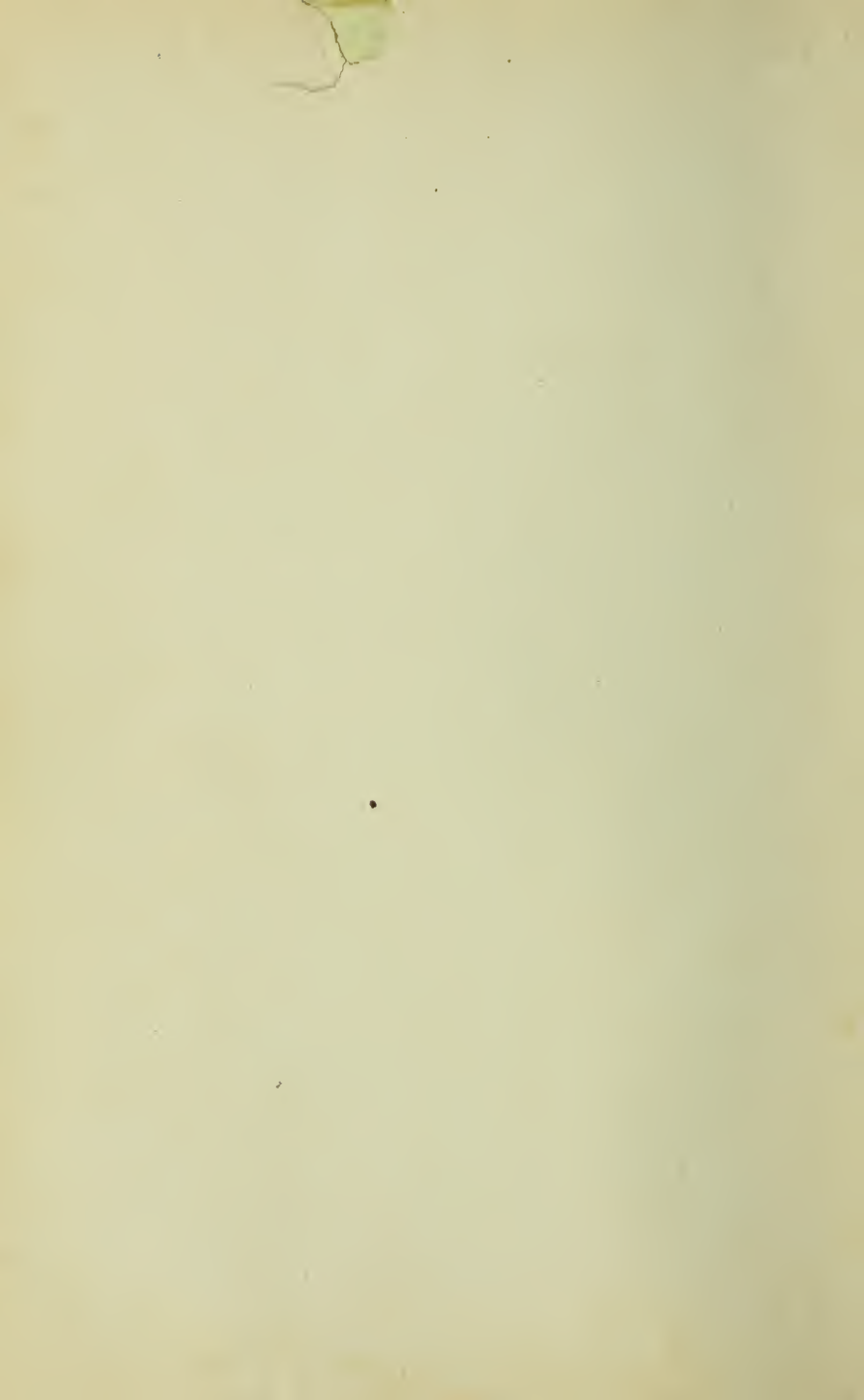
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DEVELOPMENT
OF
ENGLISH LITERATURE
AND
LANGUAGE

BY

ALFRED H. WELSH, A.M.

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VOLUME I

All profitable study is a silent disputation—an intellectual gymnastic; and the most improving books are precisely those which most excite the reader. . . . To read passively, to learn,—is, in reality, not to learn at all.—SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON

NINTH EDITION

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TO

GOVERNOR CHARLES FOSTER.

DEAR SIR:—Not the least of our national glories are the literary remains of the best of our public men. At a period when the general literature of the country was the contempt of Europe, our statesmen wrote in the English of Addison and Junius. Classic eloquence adorned the Revolutionary council, and the splendid succession of intellect in action mounted to its grandest development in the triumvirate of Calhoun, Clay, and Webster. Nor latterly has that noble lineage failed. Seward and Sumner have illustrated elegant scholarship in the trustees of power. Within a few years, historians and poets have represented us in foreign courts, while others—notably the lamented Garfield—have carried the world of ideas into that of catch-words and party habits. In this there is cause to rejoice. It signifies that we are gravitating in the ideal direction; that art, sentiment, and imagination are dividing favor with trade and government. It means the gradual uplift of the Republic towards the high-water mark of cultivated mind—catholicity of thought, sensibility, and practice. By culture we become citizens of the universe. The work of the scholar, less liable to be partisan, is more apt to be in the interest of civilization, based not upon class-feeling, but on broad grounds of general justice. Nations are not truly great solely because of their numbers, their freedom, their activity. It is in the conjunction of fine culture with sagacity, of high reason with principle, that the ideal of national greatness is to be placed. Only thus can America stand, as she is privileged to do, for the aspirations and future of mankind.

The paths proper to the statesman and the artist can rarely coincide, but they may often touch: and because I have pleasure in this tangency of pursuits which promises to organize literature into institutions, tending thus to their refinement and expansion,—I also have pleasure in the inscription of these volumes to your Excellency, who, amid the absorbing cares of business and the arduous realities of office, have never become the slave of material circumstances, nor ever been found wanting in an active sympathy with cosmopolitan aims, displaying on the theatre of politics the virtues which impart grace and dignity to private character.

But the pleasure is peculiar in remembering your early and generous friendship, through which I am now permitted to hope that these pages may contribute, albeit in a limited way, to form judicious readers, intelligent writers, or well-furnished speakers; minister to breadth of thought or beneficence of feeling; strengthen faith or enkindle hope; deepen or multiply the sense of truth, beauty, and right, whence all true manliness is fed.

Sincerely yours,

A. H. W.

893209



F. L. Stevens.

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PROLOGUE.

A nation's literature is the outcome of its whole life. To consider it apart from the antecedents and environments which form the national genius were to misapprehend its nature and its bearing. Its growth in kind and degree is determined by four capital agencies,—RACE, or hereditary dispositions; SURROUNDINGS, or physical and social conditions; EPOCH, or spirit of the age; PERSON, or reactionary and expressive force. Historical phenomena are not all to be resolved, as with Draper, into physiological; nor all to be explained, as with Buckle, by an *a priori* necessity; nor chiefly to be referred, as with Taine, to the sky, the weather, and the nerves. On the other hand, they are as far removed from an individual spontaneity as from a depressing fatalism. Personal genius remakes the society which evolves it. In so far as it rises above the table-land of national character, it not only expresses but intensifies the national type. Shakespeare and Bacon wrought under the circumstances of their birth, but were also, by their own supremacy, original and independent sources of influence. Yet progress is according to law. In the midst of eternal change is unity. The relations of the constants and the variables have the true marks of development. On a survey of the whole, human wills, however free, are seen to conform, under a general Providence, to a definite end.

A history of English Literature requires, therefore, a description of English soil and climate, of English thought and English character, as they exist when first the English people come upon the arena of history, of the growth of that character and that

thought, as they are colored by the foreign infusions of Celt, Roman, Dane, and Norman, or impressed and fostered by the new ideal—Christianity. Nor can any man understand the American mind who fails to appreciate its connection with English history, ancient and modern. On English soil were first developed what he most values in his ancestral spirit—the habits, the principles, and the faith, which have made this country to be what it is. As we have no American language which is not a graft on the English stock, though there be minor points of difference,—so we have no American literature which does not flow in a common stream of sentiment from English hearths and English altars. What combinations will hereafter manifest themselves in consequence of democratic tendencies and a gradual amalgamation with all the other nations of Europe, is an open question; but the distinctive features which have displayed themselves within the present century can hardly be deemed of sufficient strength to color or disturb the primitive current.

So far as a historical work may be intended to be an educational appliance, it obviously should be neither a presentation of chronological details nor a mere discussion of causes. The high and natural destination of the soul is the full development of its moral and intellectual faculties. Hence knowledge is chiefly valuable as a means of mental activity. And since the desire of unity, and the necessity of referring effects to their causes, are the mainspring of energy, the knowledge that a thing is,—that a certain author wrote certain books, that a certain book contains a certain passage, that a certain passage contains a certain opinion,—is far less important than the knowledge how or why it is,—how the author, the book, the opinion are related, as consequent and antecedent, to some dominant idea or moral state; how this idea or state is shaped by natural bent and constraining force; how, from this primitive bent and moulding

force, we may see in advance, and half predict the character of human events and productions; how beneath literary remains we can unearth the beatings of living hearts centuries ago, as the lifeless wreck of a shell is a clue to the entire and living existence. The one is a knowledge of objects as isolated; the other, of objects as connected. The first gives facts; the second gives *power*. An individual may possess an ample magazine of the former, and still be little better than a barbarian. Accordingly I have aimed at the golden mean,—a judicious union of facts and philosophy, of narrative and reflection, of objective description and subjective meditation. Color and form may be desirable to attract the eye, but the interlacing, spiritual force, that blends them into harmony and coherence, is required to make their lesson disciplinary, available, and enduring.

Again, it is a law of intelligence that the greater the number of objects to which our consciousness is simultaneously extended, the smaller is the intensity with which it is able to consider each, and therefore the less vivid and distinct will be the information obtained. If the points considered are intermingled, the rays are not brought to a focus, and the mental eye,—following the lines, but nowhere abiding,—instead of a clear and well-defined image, perceives only a shadowy and confused outline. Now, to the ordinary student, it is believed that the treatment of authors in our current text-books presents the fantastic groupings of the kaleidoscope,—a bewildering show. In the whirl and entanglement of topics, he sees nothing in an undivided light, and receives no lasting and organic impressions. He reads passively, conceives feebly, and forgets speedily. Therefore each leading author is here discussed under the classified heads of BIOGRAPHY, WRITINGS, STYLE, RANK, CHARACTER, and INFLUENCE. Others are added when rising into special interest and significance. *One thing at a time* is the accepted condition for all efficient activity. While the topics are logically related as the

more or less interdependent parts of a whole, each receives the amplest justice by being made in its turn the central subject of thought. The mind in its work thus becomes more animated and energetic, because its ideas are kindred, all converging to a definite because to a single impression. By such an arrangement, moreover, the logical powers are trained, and the student unconsciously acquires a *habit* of bringing, in writing or speaking, his thoughts out of chaos into order.

Further, a great man, his career, his example, his ideas, can take no strong and permanent hold of the heart and mind, until these have become an integral part of our established associations of thoughts, feelings, and desires. But this can only be accomplished by *time*. The attention must be detained till the subject becomes real, as the face of a friend; fixed, as the sun and stars: then the energies of apprehension, of judgment, of sympathy, are aroused; and images, principles, truths, sentiments, though the words be forgotten, become fadeless acquisitions, assimilated into the very substance of the student's living self. Hence, as the end of liberal education is the cultivation of the student through the awakened exercise of his faculties, the authors studied should be relatively few and representative. Time is wasted and the powers are dissipated by attempting too much. Preëminent authors are creative and pictorial, reflecting, with singular fidelity, the peculiarities of their age; and by limiting the discussion to such, the student acquires the most in learning the least.

Regarding language as an apparatus for the conveyance of thought, and mindful that whatever force is absorbed by the machine is deducted from the result, I have carefully excluded polemical and conjectural matter from the body of the work, have seldom diverted attention by introduction of foot-notes, and have employed dates but sparingly. 'Biography,' says Lowell, 'from day to day holds dates cheaper and facts dearer,'

—not all facts, indeed, but the essential ones, those of psychological purport, which underlie the life and make the individual man. To the same end—economy of mental energy—the early poets, including Chaucer, are presented in a more or less modernized form, with an occasional retention of the antique dialect for its illustrative uses.

Neither the artist nor his art, as before stated, can be understood and estimated independently of his times. No enlarged or profound conception of intellectual culture is possible without completeness of view,—without a well-defined notion of the other elements of society, and of those products designed to convince of truth or to arouse to action, as well as of those whose prime object is to address the imagination or to please the taste. Consequently, each of the periods, into which the work is divided according to what seemed their predominant characteristics, is introduced by a sketch of the *features* which distinguish it, and of the forces which go to shape it, including POLITICS, the state of SOCIETY, RELIGION, POETRY, the DRAMA, the NOVEL, the PERIODICAL, HISTORY, THEOLOGY, ETHICS, SCIENCE, PHILOSOPHY. No one who aspires now to literary power can afford to be ignorant of the scientific phase of modern thought. The educational value of philosophy is peculiarly apparent in its effects on the culture and discipline of the mind,—to quicken it, to teach it precision, to lead it to inquire into the causes and relations of things, to awaken it to a vigorous and varied exertion. Not less salutary in this point of view, and far more so in another, are theology and ethics. Moral culture and religious growth cannot be excluded from any just conception of education. Broadly stated, it is of vast moment to the student to reflect upon the motives and springs of human action, to face the unexplained mystery of thought, to ask himself, What is right, and what wrong; what am I, and whither going; what my history, and my destiny?

According to an enlightened science of education, it is difficult to see the utility of a text-book, though critical, that is wholly abstracted from the literature itself. Its criticisms, its general observations, are meaningless and powerless without illustrative specimens to verify them. They produce no answering thoughts, no questioning, and thus no valuable activity. The student is expected blindly to yield himself to the direction of another. He forms no independent judgment, is excited to no disputation, is stimulated to no profitable or pleasurable exercise. But instruction is only instruction as it enables us to teach ourselves, and leaves on the mind serviceable images and contemplations. If truth is not expansive, if it is not recast and used to interpret nature and guide the life, wherein is its value? The materials of discipline and culture are furnished, not by statements *about* literature, but by the literature itself. To refine the taste, to sharpen thought, to inspire feeling, the student must be brought closely and consciously into contact with personality,—that is, with the writer's productions. Not only are extracts to be presented, but when practicable and expedient, entire artistic products. These are to be *interpreted*; and in them, as in a mirror, the student should be taught to recognize the genius that constructed them,—his style, his character, the manners, opinions, and civilization of the period.

Particular care has been taken to insure an interest in the personal life of an author; for all the rules that have ever been prescribed for controlling the attention find their principal value in this,—that they induce or require an *interest* in the subject-matter. Hence the value of reported sayings, private journals, correspondence, striking events, gossip incidents,—the scenery and personages that belong to the period, and which have the effect to charm the mind into a sympathetic attitude toward the author's work. 'As the enveloping English ivy lends a

living charm and attractiveness to many a ruined castle and abbey, which would prove uninviting to the tourist standing in its naked deformity, so a reasonable amplitude of treatment often throws a wonderful fascination over old names and dates, otherwise uninteresting.'

It would seem obvious that a history of English Literature should note in a catholic and liberal spirit the practical lessons suggested by its theme. If it warms not the feelings into noble earnestness, elevates not the mind's ideals, nor supplies healthful truths by which to live and to die, it is lamentably defective; and the fault is not in the subject, but in the historian. When Dr. Arnold was planning his history, he said: "My highest ambition . . . is to make my history the very reverse of Gibbon in this respect, that whereas the whole spirit of his work, from its low morality, is hostile to religion without speaking directly against it, so my greatest desire would be, in my history, by its high morals and its general tone, to be of use to the cause, *without actually bringing it forward.*" Without twisting a story into a sermon, I have humbly endeavored to present it as the artist describes nature,—with a light falling upon it from the region of the highest and truest. As to the benefits of this study *per se*, they cannot be overestimated. He can hardly hope for eminence as a writer, who has not enriched his mind and perfected his style by familiarity with the literary masters and masterpieces; while to have fed on high thoughts and to have companioned with those—

'Whose soul the holy forms
Of young imagination hath kept pure,'

are, beyond all teaching, the virtue-making powers.

Every thinker, the most original, owes his originality to the originality of all. 'Very little of me,' said Goethe, 'would be left, if I could but say what I owe to my predecessors and contemporaries.' Omnipotence creates, man combines. He can be originative, strictly, only in development, in the form of his

funded thought, in the fusion of his collected materials, as the sculptor in the conception of his statue, or the architect in the design of his edifice. My scope and purposes being such as indicated, I have drawn freely from all the fountains around me,—have wished to absorb all the light anywhere radiating. To the many who have helped me, it is a pleasure to record my obligations in the manner which seems most accordant with the objects and uses to be subserved,—either explicitly in the text, or collectively in the List of Authorities. To some sources, however, I am preëminently indebted,—to the literary histories of Anderson, Bascom, and Taine; to the critical essays of Macaulay, Hazlitt, and Whipple; to the philosophical treatises of Lecky, Buckle, Lewes, and Uberweg. I wish, also, to render acknowledgments to personal friends,—to Rev. J. L. Grover for free access to the Columbus Library; to General Joseph Geiger, and his accomplished assistant, Miss Mary Harbaugh, for the liberal privileges of the Ohio State Library; to Professor Alston Ellis, Ph.D., for valuable suggestions; to Rev. Daniel F. Smith, and Mr. James Bishop Bell, of Chicago, the scholarly readers, for their critical and unstinted revision of the proof-sheets; to Rev. F. W. Gunsaulus, and A. E. Clevenger, A.M., for large and important aid in the preparation of a copious index.

In conclusion, my supreme anxiety has been to produce not a brilliant but a useful book, and the results are therefore hopefully commended to a conscientious and catholic criticism, a criticism that shall take high ground,—that shall aim to promote the common weal,—that shall not look through a microscope when it should look through a telescope,—that shall illuminate excellences as well as indicate errors,—that shall contemplate the whole before it adjudicates on the parts,—that shall be perceptive, sympathetic, and suggestive.

THE AUTHOR.

Columbus, Ohio, July 4, 1882.

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DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE.

FORMATIVE PERIOD.

CHAPTER I.

FORMING OF THE PEOPLE.

The harvest gathered in the fields of the Past is to be brought home for the use of the Present.—*Dr. Arnold.*

History does not stand *outside* of nature, but in her very heart, so that the historian only grasps a people's character with true precision when he keeps in full view its geographical position, and the influences which its surroundings have wrought upon it.—*Ritter.*

Geographical.—We see, by reference to the map, that England—the land from which our language and many of our institutions are derived—is the largest of three countries comprising the island of *Great Britain*.¹ The remaining two are Wales and Scotland. These three, with Ireland, constitute the *United Kingdom*; and this, with its foreign possessions, the *British Empire*.

England, consisting chiefly of low plains and gentle hills, occupies the central and southern portion of the island; and Wales, mountainous and marshy, the western. Scotland is the northern division, storm-beaten by a hostile ocean; mountainous and sterile in the north, but abounding in fertile plains in the south.

Britain is separated from France by the English Channel, from Ireland by the Irish Sea, and from Germany by the North Sea, notorious for its wrecks.

¹ *Great Britain*, because there is another land also called Britain,—the northwestern corner of Gaul; but this last is now commonly called Brittany. The two names, however, are really the same, and both are called in Latin *Britannia*.

Its entire extent is about ninety thousand square miles, or nearly twice the area of the State of New York.

It is divided into counties, or *shires*, of which England has forty, Wales twelve, Scotland thirty-three.

Its climate is moist with the vapors that rise forever from the great sea-girdle, and its sky sombre with the clouds that are fed by ceaseless exhalations,—conditions which, however conducive to splendor of verdure, are less nurturing to refined and nimble thought than to sluggish and melancholy temperament; for man, forced to accommodate himself to circumstances, contracts habits and aptitudes corresponding to them.

No European country should have a deeper interest for English or American readers; none is so rich in learning and science, in wise men and useful arts; but nothing in its early existence indicated the greatness it was destined to attain. We are to think of it in those dim old days as, intellectually and physically, an island in a northern sea—the joyless abode of rain and surge, forest and bog, wild beast and sinewy savage, which, as it struggled from chaos into order, from morning into prime, should become the residence of civilized energy and Christian sentiment, of smiling love and sweet poetic dreams.

Britons.—When we learn that the same grammatical principles, the same laws of structure, dominate throughout the languages of Europe, and that, even when their apparent differences are most obvious, it may yet be proved that there is a complete identity in their main roots, there can be no shadow of doubt that they were once identical, and that the many peoples who use them, once, long before the beginning of recorded annals, dwelt together in the same pastoral tents. Somewhere in the quadrilateral which extends from the Indus to the Euphrates, and from the Oxus to the Persian Gulf, amid scenery ‘grandiose yet severe,’ lived this mother-race, unknown even to tradition, but revealed by linguistic science,—parent of the speculative subtlety of Germany, of the imperial energy of England, of the vivid intelligence of France, of the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome. Its most ancient name with which we are acquainted is *Aryas*, derived from the root *ar*, to plough, and which therefore implies originally an agricultural as distinguished from a rude and nomadic people. Just when it began to wander away from its cradle-land is un-

known; but gradually, perhaps by the natural growth of population, perhaps by the restless spirit of enterprise, the old home was abandoned; and it often happened that a wandering band parted asunder into two or more others in the course of its wanderings, who forgot, as they separated, the rock whence they were hewn and the hole of the pit whence they were digged. In most cases they entered upon territory already inhabited by other races, but these were commonly either destroyed or driven from the select parts into out-of-the-way corners.

First of all, in quest of new fortunes, came the *Celts*, pressing their way into Germany, Italy, Spain, Gaul (now France), and thence into Britain. The area over which Celtic names are found diffused shows the original extent of their dominion. These pre-English Celts, ever waning and dying, survive chiefly in the modern Highlanders, Irish¹ and Welsh.² Their history, as Britons, finds its earliest solid footing in the narrative of a Roman soldier. Early historians, indeed, who could look into the far and shadowy past with an unquestioning confidence, marshalled kings and dynasties in complete chronology and exact succession. They made British antiquity run parallel with 'old hushed Egypt,' with the prophets and judges of Israel. We are gravely told of one British king who flourished in the time of Saul, of another who was contemporary with Solomon; that King Lear had grown old in government when Romulus and Remus were suckled; that the Britons were sprung from Trojan ancestry, and took their name from Brutus, who, an exile and troubled wanderer, was directed by the oracle of Diana to come to Albion,³—

'That pale, that white-faced shore,
Whose foot spurns back the ocean's roaring tides.'

Standing before the altar of the goddess, with vessel of wine and blood of white hart, he had repeated nine times,—

'Goddess of woods, tremendous in the chase
To mountain boars, and all the savage race!
Wide o'er the ethereal walks extends thy sway,
And o'er the infernal mansions void of day!
Look upon us on earth! unfold our fate,
And say what region is our destined seat!
Where shall we next thy lasting temples raise?
And choirs of angels celebrate thy praise?'

¹ Meaning 'Men of the West.'

² Meaning 'Strangers.'

³ The island, not yet Britain, was ruled over by Albion, a giant, and son of Neptune, who gave it his name. Presuming, says one account, to oppose the progress of Hercules in his western march, he was slain.

In deep sleep, in vision of the night, he was answered,—

‘ Brutus! there lies beyond the Gallic bounds
An Island which the western sea surrounds,
By giants once possessed; now few remain
To bar thy entrance, or obstruct thy reign.
To reach that happy shore thy sails employ;
There fate decrees to raise a second Troy,
And found an empire in thy royal line,
Which time shall ne’er destroy, nor bounds confine.’

We call these stories legendary; once—as late as the seventeenth century—they were accredited history. Certainly, the faith which received them as such seems to us better than the vicious scepticism which would beggar us of the accumulated inheritance of ages by destroying belief in the evidence. They may, and doubtless do, contain germs of truth—left on the shifting sands as wave after wave of forgotten generations broke on the shores of eternity. Many a mighty empire, it is true, has faded forever out of the memory of man; but much that was once thought irretrievably lost has been reclaimed; and, hereafter, historical science may bring to light from the dark oblivion of these pre-historic Britons more than is now dreamed of in our philosophy.

Fables of a line of kings before the Romans, have left one legend that has become to all a wondrous reality—the story of King Lear, transmuted by the alchemy of genius into perhaps the most impressive and awful tragedy in the range of dramatic literature.

Roman Conquest.—Meanwhile, our first authentic information in regard to them is given by Julius Cæsar, who, fifty-five years before Christ, led his brass-mailed legions into Britain from Gaul. If the attack was fierce, the resistance was heroic, and marks the rising pulse in that flood

‘ Of British freedom which, to the open sea
Of the world’s praise, from dark antiquity
Hath flowed.’

While the Roman standard-bearer leaped into the waves, and bade his hesitating comrades follow, the Britons dashed into the surf to strike the invader before his foot polluted their soil. The invasion added nothing to the Roman power or pride. At the end of his campaigns, Cæsar had viewed the island rather than possessed it; and when he gave thanks at Rome to the

gods, it may be questioned whether it was for a conquest or an escape.

Under his successors, however, about the year 85, when the Republic had become the Empire, the central and southern portion of the country became a Roman province, and was subject to Roman rule nearly four hundred years.

Slow, feeble and imperfect victory, as in the evening of a well-fought day, when the veteran's arm is less strong and his passions less violent.

Effects.—During this time much was done to improve the condition of the natives. The Roman coins, laws, language, were introduced. Governed with justice, they became less estranged. Schools were established. The conquered were grouped together in cities guarded by massive walls, and linked together by a net-work of magnificent roads, which ran straight from town to town. The modern railways of England often follow the line of these Roman roads. Agriculture and the useful arts prospered. Many came from Italy, and built temples, palaces, public baths, and other splendid structures, living in great luxury and delight. Their beautiful floors, composed of differently colored brick, and arranged in elegant patterns, are occasionally unearthed—for cornfields and meadows now cover this Roman splendor, and new cities have risen upon the ruins of the old.

But Roman civilization was arrested and modified by the calamities of the fifth century. In the anarchy and bloodshed of barbarian invasion, the Romanized Britons, who had thus far preserved their national identity, went down; albeit, in their fall, they were as forest leaves strewn by autumnal winds—leaving behind them a fertilizing power in the soil, whence other trees should bud and bloom in the light of other summers, and gather strength to battle with the inclemencies of other winters. The imperial armies brought with them the Christian faith; and Britain, about to undergo a new yoke, had received the principle that was destined to save her from complete desolation. Even in the savage North, where Roman arms had failed to penetrate, Christ had conquered souls.

Anglo-Saxon Conquest.—In the north and west, sheltered by their mountain fastnesses, were the Celtic *Picts* and *Silures*, whom no severity could reduce to subjection and no resistance

restrain from plunder. For two centuries they had been the terror of the civilized Britons, as wild animals harass and persecute the tame of their own species.

Side by side with them, and often driving them back upon their own territory, were the *Scots*, a Celtic tribe originally from Ireland, whence they crossed in so great a number in their little flat-bottomed boats as finally to give their own name to the district they invaded. In 368 we find their united hordes pursuing their depredations as far as London, and repelled with great difficulty by Theodosius, a Roman general.

Soon thereafter the Empire began falling in pieces, and at length its legions were wholly withdrawn from Britain for the defense of Italy against the Goths. The heart of the Britons was faint. They had been so long defended by their Roman masters that when left alone they were incapable of defending themselves. Piteously, but vainly, they entreated once more for protection, exclaiming, 'The barbarians drive us to the sea, and the sea drives us back to the barbarians.' In their extremity they applied, with the usual promises of land and pay, to the Germanic tribes of the **Jutes**, who, driven by the pressure of want or of foes from the sunless woods and foggy clime of their native Jutland, had already spread their ravages along the eastern shores of Britain, and whose pirate-boats were not improbably cruising off the coast at the moment,—

'Then, sad relief, from the bleak coast that hears
The German Ocean roar, deep-blooming, strong,
And yellow-haired, the blue-eyed Saxon¹ came.'

They came to stay—to settle a people and to found a state. The fame of their adventure attracted others, till, their numbers swelling, they treacherously turned their arms against the nation they came to protect, and established themselves on the fruitful plains of *Kent*.

From the sand-flats of Holstein and the morasses of Friesland swarmed the **Saxons** in successive bands, and settled, with sword and battle-axe, to the south, west and east, founding the kingdoms of *Sussex*, *Wessex* and *Essex*.

From the wild waste of Sleswick, swept by the blast of the North, wan and ominous, poured the **Angles** in a series of

¹ A generic name by which they and their neighbors were known to the Romans, though conveniently applied in particular to a southern tribe.

descents, and slowly, over deserted walls and polluted shrines, penetrated into the interior, effecting the settlements of *North-umberland*, *Anglia* and *Mercia*. They seem to have been the most numerous and energetic of the invaders, since they occupied larger districts, and in the end gave their name to the land and its people. It was now that Britain began to be called *Angle-land*, subsequently contracted into *England*, meaning the 'land of the Angles,' or 'English.'

After nearly two hundred years of bitter warfare the island was given over to the dominion of the pagan conquerors, who meantime grouped themselves into the several petty kingdoms indicated, which were collectively known as the *Heptarchy*. Their history is like a history of 'kites and crows.' Freed from the common pressure of war against the Britons, they turned their energies to combats with one another. Little by little, as the tide of supremacy rolled backward and forward, one predominated over the others, till eventually they were all made subject to Wessex in the year 827, and for the first time there was something like national unity, with the promise of national development.

Effects.—The conquest, stubbornly resisted and hardly won, was a sheer dispossession of the conquered. Priests were slain at the altar, churches fired, peasants driven by the flames to fling themselves on rings of pitiless steel. Some, the wealthier, fled in panic across the Channel, and took refuge with their kindred in Brittany. Others, who would still be free, retired to Wales, which became the secure retreat of Christianity. The rest, who were not cut down, were enslaved. These are they who, attached to the soil, will rise gradually with the rise of industry, and spread by amalgamation through all ranks of society. In the ascendancy of the Saxon, who caused his own language, customs, and laws to become paramount, was laid the sure foundation of the future nation—the one German state that rose on the wreck of Rome.

It is in this sanguinary and ineffectual struggle that romance places the fair Rowena, of fatal charms, with her golden wine-cup; the enchanter Merlin, who instructs Vortigern, king of the Britons, how to find the two sleeping dragons that hinder the building of his tower; the famous Arthur, with his Knights of the Round Table:

‘The fellowship of the table round,
 So famous in those days,
 Whereat a hundred noble knights,
 And thirty sat always.’

Danish Conquest.—But Saxon Britain was also to be brought to the brink of that servitude or extermination which her arms had brought upon the Celt. About the end of the eighth century, the roving Northmen,¹ pouring redundant from their bleak and barren regions, began to hover off the English coast, growing in numbers and hardihood as they crept southward to the Thames. For two hundred years the raven—dark and dreaded emblem of the Dane—was the terror and scourge of Saxon homes. After a long series of disasters, aggravated by internal feuds, Danish kings occupied the throne from 1016 till 1042, when the Saxon line was restored in the person of Edward the Confessor.

Effects.—The same wild panic, as the light black skiffs strike inland along the river reaches or moor around the river islets; the same sights of horror—reddened horizons, slaughtered men, and children tossed on spikes or sold in the market-place. Christian priests were again slain at the altar. Coveting their treasures of gold and silver, but despising their more valuable ones of knowledge, they made use of books in setting fire to the monasteries. Letters and religion disappeared before these Northmen as before the Northmen of old. The arts of peace were forgotten. Light was all but quenched in a chaotic and muddy ignorance. To an England that had forgotten its origins was brought back the barbaric England of its pirate forefathers.

When it is considered that the invaders were nearly half as many as the invaded, we are prepared to believe that their influence in language, in physical type, in manners, was far greater than is usually conceded.

Norman Conquest.—When the great comet of 1060 waved over England, the enervated Saxon looked up and beheld what seemed to him a portent that should, as Milton describes it,

‘—— shake from its horrid hair
 Pestilence and war.’

In the ninth century, the Northmen—these same daring and

¹ The terms *Northmen*, *Norsemen*, or *Scandinavians*, are general designations of the inhabitants of Scandinavia (Norway, Sweden and Denmark), who at about this period were called, without distinction, *Danes*.

rapacious warriors—penetrated into France, and in 913 had settled in the northern part, where, blending with the French and adopting their language, they rapidly grew up into great prosperity and power. Their name was softened into *Normans*, and their settlement was called Normandy, meaning the ‘Land of the North-man.’

In 1066, polished and transformed by the infusion of foreign blood, the Normans, in their well-knit coats of mail, with sword and lance, invaded and subdued England in the single battle of Hastings, under Duke William, who is therefore known as *William the Conqueror*.

Oppression.—The Norman was in a hostile country; and, to maintain himself, became an oppressor. He appropriated the soil, levied taxes, built for himself castles, with their parapets and loop-holes, their outer and inner courts—of which, within a century, there were eleven hundred and fifteen. William, as his power grew, went from a show of justice to ferocity. Wherever his resentment was provoked—wherever submission to his exactions was refused—were the red lights of his burnings. Men ate human flesh under the pressure of consuming famine; the perishing sold themselves into slavery to obtain food; corpses rotted in the highways because none were left to bury them. The invaders—sixty thousand—are an armed colony. The Saxon is made a body slave on his own estate. For an offence against the forest laws he will lose his eyes. At eight o’clock he is warned by the ringing of the curfew bell to cover up his fire and retire. ‘What savage unsocial nights,’ says Lamb, ‘must our ancestors have spent, wintering in caves and unilluminated fastnesses! They must have lain about and grumbled at one another in the dark. What repartees could have passed when you must have felt about for a smile, and handled your neighbor’s cheek to be sure that he understood it?’ Villages are swept away to make hunting grounds for Norman monarchs. A Norman abbot digs up the bones of his predecessors, and throws them without the gates. In a word, England, in forced and sullen repose, was under a galling yoke, and to all outward appearances was French.

Effects.—(1.) Introduction of Feudalism,—the distribution of land among military captains, to hold by the sword what the sword had won. In twenty years from the coronation of

William, almost the whole of English soil had been divided, on condition of fealty and assistance, among his followers, while the peasantry were bound as serfs. The meanest Norman rose to wealth and power. Here is the ordinance of the great feudal principle of service :

‘We command that all earls, barons, knights, sergeants and freemen be always provided with horses and arms as they ought, and that they be always ready to perform to us their whole service, in manner as they owe it to us of right for their fees and tenements, and as we have appointed to them by the common council of our whole kingdom, and as we have granted to them in fee with right of inheritance.’

Of the native proprietors many perished, others were impoverished, and some retained their estates as vassals of Norman lords. To cast off the chains of feudality will be the labor of six centuries.

(2.) Introduction of Chivalry,¹ or Knighthood, a military institution which was prompted by an enthusiastic benevolence and combined with religious ceremonies, the avowed purpose of which was to protect the weak and defend the right. It appears to have had its origin in the military distinction by which certain feudal tenants were bound to serve on horseback, equipped with the coat of mail. He who thus fought, and had been invested with helmet, shield and spear in a solemn manner, wanted nothing more to render him a knight. From the advantages of the mounted above the ordinary combatant, probably arose that far-famed valor and keen thirst for renown which ultimately became the essential qualities of a knightly character.

(3.) Introduction of French speech. This became the language of the court and polite literature. As late as the middle of the fourteenth century it was said: ‘Children in scole, agenst the usage and manir of all other nations, beeth compelled for to leve hire (their) owne langage, and for to construe hir (their) lessons and hir thynges in Frenche, and so they haveth sethe Normans came first into England.’ They made such a point of this that nobles sent their sons to France to preserve them from barbarisms. Students of the universities were obliged to converse either in French or Latin. ‘Gentilmen children beeth taught to speke Frensche from the tyme they bith rokked in hire cradell . . . and uplondish men will likne himself to gentylmen, and fondeth with great besynesse for to speke Frensche to be told of.’

¹ From the French *cheval*, a horse.

(4.) Introduction of French poetry. Of course, the Norman, who despised the Saxon, loved none but French ideas and verses.

(5.) Expulsion of the English language from literature and culture. No longer or scarcely written, ceasing to be studied in schools or to be spoken in higher life, English became the badge of inferiority and dependence. Thus *ox*, *calf*, *sheep*, *pig*, *deer*, are Anglo-Saxon names; while *beef*, *veal*, *mutton*, *pork*, and *venison* are Norman-French: because it was the business of the former part of the population to *tend* these animals while living, but of the latter to *eat* them when prepared for the feast. The distinction is noticed in his sprightly way by Walter Scott:

“Why, how call you those grunting brutes running about on their four legs?” demanded Wamba.

“Swine, fool, swine,” said the herd; “every fool knows that.”

“And swine is good Saxon,” said the Jester; “but how call you the sow when she is flayed and drawn and quartered, and hung by the heels like a traitor?”

“Pork,” answered the swineherd.

“I am very glad every fool knows that too,” said Wamba; “and pork, I think, is good Norman French; and so when the brute lives, and is in charge of a Saxon slave, she goes by her Saxon name; but becomes a Norman, and is called pork, when she is carried to the castle hall to feast among the nobles. What dost thou think of this doctrine, friend Gurth, ha?”

“It is but too true doctrine, friend Wamba, however it got into thy fool’s pate.”

“Nay, I can tell you more,” said Wamba, in the same tone. “There is old Alderman Ox continues to hold his Saxon epithet while he is under the charge of serfs and barbarians such as thou; but becomes beef, a fiery French gallant, when he arrives before the worshipful jaws that are destined to consume him. Mynheer Calf, too, becomes Monsieur de Veau in the like manner. He is Saxon when he requires tendance, and takes a Norman name when he becomes matter of enjoyment.”

Thus does language, as we shall have further occasion to observe, bear the marks and footprints of revolutions,—the ark that rides above the water-floods which sweep away other memorials of vanished ages.

(6.) Finally, the establishment of a foreign king, a foreign prelacy, a foreign nobility, the degradation of the conquered, and the division of power and riches among the conquerors. But the absence of internal wars, due to the firm government of foreign kings, will afford time for a varied progress. The stern discipline of these two hundred years will give administrative order and judicial reform.

Fusion.—But the great masses always form the race in the end, and generally the genius and the language. If the spirit be not broken, tyranny is but a passing storm which purifies while it devastates. The people remember their native rank and their

original independence. At the end of the twelfth century there were Saxon families who had bound themselves by a perpetual vow to wear long beards from father to son in memory of the old national custom. These subjects, trodden and vilified, had the characteristic doggedness, and their predominance was sure.

A long time is required to convert a mutual hatred into harmony and peace. Two and a half centuries were needed. Among the various agencies that worked upon the hearts and habits of Norman and Saxon may be reckoned that of the clergy. Never altogether partisan, they constantly became less so. When Anselm came over from his Norman convent to be Archbishop of Canterbury, he told his countrymen plainly that a churchman acknowledged no distinction of race. Ambitious and luxurious as some were, others were humble and self-denying, and stood between the conqueror and the people, a healing influence to mitigate oppression.

The wars of the Normans made them more dependent on the Saxons, and common victories served to produce a community of interest and feeling.

The Crusades, too, by the predominant sentiment which they inspired, doubtless helped to appease the old animosities.

The gradual change in the relation of the two races, as well as an important influence in accelerating that change, is shown by the marriage of Henry the First to a Saxon princess, which soon led to the restoration of the Saxon dynasty in the person of Henry the Second. 'At present,' says an author in the time of this monarch, 'as the English and Normans dwell together, and have constantly intermarried, the two nations are so completely mingled together, that, at least as regards freemen, one can scarcely distinguish who is Norman and who English.'

The loss of Normandy snapped the threads of French connections, and the Normans, by the necessities of their isolation, began to regard England as their home, and the English as their countrymen.

Add to these causes the softening influence of time, and we are prepared for that final fusion of the Normans with the mass by which the nation became one again.

English, though shunned by cultivation and rank, remained unshaken as the popular tongue. The Norman, too, must learn

it, in order to direct his tenants. His Saxon wife speaks it, his children are accustomed to the sound of it. Slowly, by compromise and the necessity of being understood, it prevails,—English still in root and sap, though saturated with the vocabulary of Norman-French.

But truly to understand the chemistry of the English nation, we must penetrate its soul, learn somewhat of its faculties and feelings, study the man invisible—the under-world of events and forms—distinguish the separate moulds in which the entering elements were cast.

Celtic.—To estimate the advantages of law and order, we must have stood with the stately blue-eyed Briton in his circular hut of timber and reeds, surmounted by a conical roof which served at once to admit daylight and to allow smoke to escape through a hole in the top; have seen a horseman ride in, converse with the inmates, then kick the sides of his steed and make his exit without having alighted; have sat in circle with the guests, each with his block of wood and piece of meat; have seen the whole family lie down to savage dreams around the central fire-place, while the wolf's long howl broke the silence of forest depth or wild fowls screamed across the wilderness of shallow waters; have wandered through their track-ways, careful to hasten home before the setting of the sun should cut us off from our village (a collection of huts amid fens and woods fortified with ramparts and ditches) to become the captive of an enemy or the prey of ravenous beast.

There is no property but arms and cattle. War is the favorite occupation. Bronze swords, spears, axes, and chariots with scythes projecting from the axle of the wheels, are the weapons. Every tribe has its own chief or chiefs, who call the common people together and confer with them upon all matters concerning the general welfare. The *cran-tara*, a stick burnt at the end and dipped in blood, carried by a dumb messenger from hamlet to hamlet, summons the warriors. A brave people, and energetic. Says Tacitus:

*The Britons willingly furnish recruits to our armies; they pay the taxes without murmuring, and they perform with zeal their duties toward the government, provided they

have not to complain of oppression. When they are offended, their resentment is prompt and violent; they may be conquered, but not tamed; they may be led to obedience, but not to servitude.'

Would you know their savagery? Imagine them—as old Celtic story tells—mixing the brains of their slain enemies with lime, and playing with the hard balls they made of them. Such a brainstone is said to have gone through the skull of an Irish chief, who lived afterwards seven years with two brains in his head, always sitting very still, lest in shaking himself he should die. Yet they esteem it infamous for a chieftain to close the door of his house at all, 'lest the stranger should come and behold his contracting soul.'

Their dead are buried in mounds. Here vases are discovered, containing their bones and ashes, together with their swords and hatchets, arrow-heads of flint and bronze, and beads of glass and amber,—for they believe, after the manner of savages, that things which are useful or pleasing to the living are needed, for pleasure or use, in the shadowy realm:

'Secure beneath his ancient hill
The British warrior slumbers still;
There lie in order, still the same,
The bones which reared his stately frame;
Still at his side his spear, his bow,
As placed two thousand years ago.'

The priests of their religion are the *Druids*, who are so careful lest their secret doctrines be revealed to the uninitiated that they teach their disciples in hidden caves and forest recesses. They are the arbiters of disputes, and the judges of crime. Whoever refuses to submit to their decree is banished from human intercourse. The young resort to them for instruction. They teach the eternal transmigration of souls. They will not worship their gods under roofs. At noon and night, within a circular area, of enormous stones and of vast circumference,¹ they make their appeals with sacrifices—captives and criminals, or the innocent and fair. When the priest has ripped open the

¹One of these—Stonehenge—may yet be seen standing in mysterious and awful silence on Salisbury Plain. So massive are the pieces, that it was fabled to have been built by giants or magic art:

Not less than that huge pile (from some abyss
Of mortal power unquestionably sprung,) Whose hoary Diadem of pendant rocks
Confines the shrill-voiced whirlwind, round and round
Eddying within its vast circumference,
On Sarum's naked plain.—*Wordsworth*.

body of a human being or lighted the fires around a living mass, we may hear the shriek of mad excitement as the 'congregation' dance and shout. Nor is their teaching confined to their worship. Says Cæsar:

'The Druids discuss many things concerning the stars and their revolutions, the magnitude of the globe and its various divisions, the nature of the universe, energy and power of the immortal gods.'

There are bards, also, with power and privilege, who sing the praises of British heroes to the crowd. A wheel striking on strings is the instrument of these our ancestral lyrists. Among the three things which will secure a man from hunger and nakedness is the blessing of a bard. His curse brings fatalities upon man and beast.

Four hundred years cannot but have made a vast difference between the fierce savages who rushed into the sea on that old September day, and those who were citizens of the stately Roman towns or tillers of the fertile districts that lay around them. Tacitus is said to have expressed surprise at the facility and eagerness with which the Britons adopted the customs, the arts, and the garb of their conquerors. Under the Roman Empire there were British kings, of whom one of the few famous was Cunobelin—the Cymbeline of the drama. Government became more centralized. A milder worship and a more merciful law were the lot of the people. The Romans improved the agriculture of the country, and bestowed upon the cultivators 'the crooked plough' with 'an eight-foot beam,' of which Virgil speaks. In the middle of the fourth century, warehouses were built in Rome for the reception of corn from Britain. An export of six hundred large barks in one season assumes the existence of a large rural population. The tin and lead mines were worked with jealous care for Roman use; and the presence of cinders at this day is the visible proof of the mining and smelting of iron.

The refinement thus introduced among the Celtic Britons was not uncommunicated to the barbarous tribes whose occupation speedily followed the retirement of the imperial armies. Traces of the Roman modes of thought are indelibly stamped upon much that relates to common life. In *January* survives the 'Two-faced Janus'; *July* embalms the memory of the mighty Julius; *March* is the month of Mars, the god of war; and *August*

claims an annual reverence for the crafty Augustus. Our May-day is the festival of Flora. Our marriage ceremonies are all Roman,—the veil, the ring, the wedding gifts, the groomsmen and bridesmaids, the bride-cake. Our funeral imagery is Roman,—the cypress, the flowers strewn upon the graves, the black for mourning. The girl who says, when her ears tingle, a distant one is talking of her, recalls the Roman belief in some influence of a mesmeric nature which produced the same effect. ‘A screech-owl at midnight,’ says Addison, ‘has alarmed a family more than a band of robbers.’ It was ever an omen of evil. No Roman superstition was more intense. Men all on fire, walking up and down the streets, seemed to Casca a prodigy less dire than ‘the bird of night’ that sat

‘Even at noonday, upon the market-place,
Hooting and shrieking.’

But there are latent qualities here which would ornament any age. With the skin of a beast slung across his loins, the exposed parts of his body painted with sundry figures, a chain of iron about his neck as a symbol of wealth, and another about his waist, his hair hanging in curling locks and covering his shoulders,—Caractacus had stood captive in the imperial presence of Claudius, and said:

‘Had my moderation in prosperity been equal to the greatness of my birth and estate, or the success of my late attempts been equal to the resolution of my mind, I might have come to this city rather as a friend to be entertained, than as a captive to be gazed upon. But what cloud soever hath darkened my present lot, yet have the Heavens and Nature given me that in birth and mind which none can vanquish or deprive me of. I well see that you make other men’s miseries the subject and matter of your triumphs, and in this my calamity, as in a still water, you now contemplate your own glory. Yet know that I am, and was, a prince, furnished with strength of men and habiliments of war; and what marvel is it if all be lost, seeing experience teacheth that the events of war are variable, and the success of policies guided by uncertain fates? As it is with me, who thought that the deep waters, like a wall enclosing our land, and it so situated by the gods as might have been a sufficient privilege and defense against foreign invasions: but now I perceive that the desire of your sovereignty admits no limitation; and if you Romans must command all, then all must obey. For mine own part, while I was able I made resistance; and unwilling I was to submit my neck to a servile yoke: so far the law of Nature alloweth every man, that he may defend himself being assailed, and to withstand force by force. Had I at first yielded, thy glory and my ruin had not been so renowned. Fortune hath now done her worst; we have nothing left us but our lives, which if thou take from us, our miseries end, and if thou spare us, we are but the objects of thy clemency.’

In many-colored robe, with a golden zone about her, Queen Boadicea exhorted the Britons on the eve of battle:

‘My friends and companions of equal fortunes!—There needeth no excuse of this my present authority or place in regard of my sex, seeing it is not unknown to you all that the

wonted manner of our nation hath been to war under the conduct of women. My blood and birth might challenge some preëminence, as spring from the roots of most royal descents; but my breath, received from the same air, my body sustained by the same soil, and my glory clouded with imposed ignominies, I disdain all superiority, and, as a fellow in bondage, bear the yoke of oppression with as heavy weight and pressure, if not more! . . . You that have known the freedom of life, will with me confess that liberty, though in a poor estate, is better than bondage with fetters of gold. . . . Have the Heavens made us the ends of the world, and not assigned the end of our wrongs? Or hath Nature, among all our free works, created us Britons only for bondage? Why, what are the Romans? Are they more than men, or immortal? Their slain carcasses sacrificed by us, and their putrefied blood corrupting our air, doth tell us they are no gods. Our persons are more tall, our bodies more strong, and our joints better knit than theirs! But you will say—they are our conquerors. Indeed, overcome we are, but by ourselves, by our own factions, still giving way to their intrusions. . . . See we not the army of Plautius crouched together like fowls in a storm? If we but consider the number of their forces and the motives of the war, we shall resolve to vanquish or die. It is better worth to fall in honour of liberty, than be exposed again to the outrages of the Romans. This is my resolution, who am but a woman; you who are men may, if you please, live and be slaves.'

Love of bright color is a Celtic passion. Diodorus told how the Gauls wore bracelets and costly finger-rings, gold corselets, dyed tunics flowered with various hues, striped cloaks fastened with a brooch and divided into many parti-colored squares, a taste still represented by the Highland plaid. This joy in the beautiful will display itself, in poetry, in an outpouring of imagery and grace of expression, as in the Cymric¹ battle-ode of Aneurin:

'Have ye seen the tusky boar,
Or the bull with sullen roar,
On surrounding foes advancing?
So Garadawg bore his lance.

As the flame's devouring force,
As the whirlwind in its course,
As the thunder's fiery stroke,
Glancing on the shivered oak;
Did the sword of Vedel's mow
The crimson harvest of the foe.'

This fancy, active and bold, is not content to conceive. It must draw and paint, vividly, in detail, as in this glimpse of a Gaelic² banquet:

'As the king's people were afterwards at the assembly they saw a couple approaching them,—a woman and a man; larger than the summit of a rock or a mountain was each member of their members; sharper than a shaving-knife the edge of their shins; their heels and hams in front of them. Should a sackful of apples be thrown on their heads, not one of them would fall to the ground, but would stick on the points of the long bristly hair which grew out of their heads; blacker than the coal or darker than the smoke was each of their members; whiter than snow their eyes. A lock of the lower beard was carried round the back of the head, and a lock of the upper beard descended so as to cover the knees; the woman had whiskers, but the man was without whiskers.'

¹ Ancient Welsh. ² Ancient Irish.

But the true artist, with an eye to see, has also a heart to feel. A bard and a prince, who has seen his sons fall in battle, wondering why he should still be left, sings of his youngest and last dead:

‘Let the wave break noisily; let it cover the shore when the joined lancers are in battle. O, Gwenn, woe to him who is too old, since he has lost you! Let the wave break noisily; let it cover the plain when the lancers join with a shock. . . . Gwenn has been slain at the ford of Morlas. Here is the bier made for him by his fierce-conquered enemy after he had been surrounded on all sides by the army of the Lloegrians; here is the tomb of Gwenn, the son of the old Llywarch. *Sweetly a bird sang on a pear tree above the head of Gwenn, before they covered him with turf; that broke the heart of the old Llywarch.*’

This vivacity, this tenderness, this sweet melancholy, will pass, to a certain degree, into English thought.

Danish.—The Danes were preëminently a sea-faring and piratical people—vultures who swept the seas in quest of prey. Their sea-kings, ‘who had never slept under the smoky rafters of a roof, who had never drained the ale-horn by an inhabited hearth,’ are renowned in the stories of the North. With no territory but the waves, no dwelling but their two-sailed ships, they laughed at the storm, and sang: ‘The blast of the tempest aids our oars; the bellowing of heaven, the howling of the thunder, hurts us not; the hurricane is our servant, and drives us whither we wish to go.’ In his last hour, the sea-king looks gladly to his immortal feasts ‘in the seats of Balder’s father,’ where ‘we shall drink ale continually from the large hollowed skulls.’

Listen to their table-talk, and from it infer the rest. A youth takes his seat beside the Danish jarl, and is reproached with ‘seldom having provided the wolves with hot meat, with never having seen for the whole autumn a raven croaking over the carnage.’ But he pacifies her by singing: ‘I have marched with my bloody sword, and the raven has followed me. Furiously we fought, the fire passed over the dwellings of men; we have sent to sleep in blood those who kept the gates.’

Here is their code of honor: ‘A brave man should attack two, stand firm against three, give ground a little to four, and only retreat from five.’ No wonder they were irresistible. Add to this the deeper incitement of an immortality in Valhalla, where they should forever hew each other in bloodless conflict.

When Saxon independence was given up to a Danish king, their character was greatly changed from what it had been during their first invasions. They had embraced the Christian faith, were

centralized, had lost much of their predatory and ferocious spirit. Long settled in England, they gradually became assimilated to the natives, whose laws and language were not radically different from their own. From these sea-wolves, who lived on the pillage of the world, the English will imbibe their maritime enterprise.

Norman.—The Normans, as we have seen, were a Scandinavian tribe with a changed nature,—Christianized, at least in the mediæval sense, and civilized. The peculiar quality of their genius was its suppleness. They intermarried with the French, borrowed the French language, adopted French customs, imitated French thought; and, in a hundred and fifty years after their settlement, were so far cultured as to consider their kinsmen, the Saxons, unlettered and rude.

Transferred to England, they become English. To these they were superior:

1. In refinement of manners. ‘The Saxons,’ says an old writer, ‘vied with each other in their drinking feats, and wasted their income by day and night in feasting, whilst they lived in wretched hovels; the French and Normans, on the other hand, living inexpensively in their fine large houses, were, besides, refined in their food and studiously careful in their dress.’

2. In taste,—the art of pleasing the eye, and expressing a thought by an outward representation. The Norman architecture, including the circular arch and the rose window with its elegant mouldings, made its appearance. ‘You might see amongst them (the Saxons) churches in every village, and monasteries in the cities, towering on high, and built in a style unknown before.’ They were to become the most skilful builders in Europe.

3. In weapons and warlike enterprise. They used the bow, fought on horseback, and were thus prepared for a more nimble and aggressive movement.

4. In intellectual culture. Five hundred and sixty-seven schools were established between the Conquest and the death of King John (1216). In poetry they were relatively cultivated. Another point of excellence was the intelligence of their clergy. The illiteracy of the Saxon was the excuse for banishing him from all valuable ecclesiastical dignities. The Norman bishops and abbots, who gradually supplanted him, were for the most

part of loftier minds than the mailed warriors who elevated them to wealth and authority.

Such were the points of superiority at which the Norman was prepared to contribute new impulses to the national character. In many respects, he was the reverse of the Saxon. In the movement of his intellect, he was prompt and spirited rather than profound. Like the Parisian, he was polite, elegant, graceful, talkative, dainty, superficial. Beauty pleased rather than exalted him. Nature was pretty rather than grand—never mystical. Love was a pastime rather than a devotion. Woman impressed him less by any spiritual transcendence than by a ‘vastly becoming smile,’ a ‘sweet and perfumed breath,’ a form ‘white as new-fallen snow on a branch.’ To show skill and courage for the meed of glory, to win the applause of the ladies, to display magnificence of dress and armor,—such was his desire and study. Here is a picture of the fancies and splendors in which he delights and loses himself. A king, wishing to console his afflicted daughter, proposes to take her to the chase in the following style:

‘To-morrow ye shall in hunting fare;
 And ride, my daughter, in a chair;
 It shall be covered with velvet red,
 And clothes of fine gold all about your head,
 With damask white and azure blue,
 Well diapered with lilies new.
 Your pommels shall be ended with gold,
 Your chains enameled many a fold,
 Your mantle of rich degree,
 Purple pall and ermine free. . . .
 Ye shall have revel, dance, and song;
 Little children, great and small,
 Shall sing as does the nightingale. . . .
 A hundred knights, truly told,
 Shall play with bowls in alleys cold,
 Your disease to drive away. . . .
 Forty torches burning bright
 At your bridge to bring you light.
 Into your chamber they shall you bring
 With much mirth and more liking.
 Your blankets shall be of fustian,
 Your sheets shall be of cloth of Rennes.
 Your head sheet shall be of pery pight,
 With diamonds set and rubies bright.
 When you are laid in bed so soft,
 A cage of gold shall hang aloft,
 With long paper fair burning,
 And cloves that be sweet-smelling,

Frankincense and olibanum,
That when ye sleep the taste may come;
And if ye no rest can take,
All night minstrels for you shall wake.'

What will come of this gallantry, splendor, and pride, when the brilliant flower is engrafted on the homely Saxon stock?

Anglo-Saxon.—Starting from the same Aryan homestead, with the same stock of ideas, with the same manners and customs, the *Teuton* takes his westward course, and settles chiefly in Germany,—

'She of the Danube and the Northern Sea.'

After centuries of separation, these two kindred meet in mist-enveloped Britain. But climate, soil, and time have changed their characters and speech. They have forgotten their mutual relationship, and meet like the lion whelps of a common lair—as foes. The Teutonic stream,—that, too, diverged. Into the mud and slime of Holland, into the forests and fens of Denmark, up into the snow-capped mountains of Sweden and Norway, across the surging main into volcanic Iceland, it branched. Danish, Norse, and Saxon, with superficial distinctions—as of Heathen and Christian, or the like—are at bottom one, Teutonic or Germanic. Inland, in the south, away from the sea, was the great division of the **High-Germans**; near the sea, by the mouths of the Rhine and Elbe, that of the **Low-Germans**, in whom we have the deeper interest. To these latter belonged the **Jutes, Angles, and Saxons**, whose language, closely resembling modern Dutch, is the plantlet of English. These tribes, known abroad as Saxons,¹ early spoken of by themselves as Angles or English, have in the more careful historic use of the present been designated as Anglo-Saxons.

The orders of society were the bond and the free. Men became serfs, or slaves, either by capture in battle or by the sentence of outraged law. Over them their master had the power of life and death. He was responsible for them as for his cattle. Rank was revered, and the freemen were divided into *earls* and *ceorls*, or *Earls* and *Churls*.

¹ So called from a short crooked sword, called a *seax*, carried by the warriors under their loose garments. Thus, Hengist, the Jute, invited to a banquet, instructed his companions to conceal their short swords beneath their garments. At a given signal—*Nimed eare Seaxes*, 'Draw your swords!'—the weapons were plunged into the hearts of their British entertainers.

The basis of society was the possession of land. The free land-holder was 'the free-necked man,' whose long hair floated over a neck that had never bent to a lord. He was 'the weaponed man,' who alone bore spear and sword. A nation of farmers, as they had been in the Sunny East, as they are to-day. He might not be a tiller of the soil, but he must acquire it if he would be esteemed. The landless one could hope for no distinction.

The social form was determined by the blood-bond. According to kinship, men were grouped into companies of ten, called a *tithing*. Every ten tithings was called a *hundred*; and several hundreds, a *shire*. Each kinsman was his kinsman's keeper. Every crime was held to have been committed by all who were related to the doer of it, and against all who were related to the sufferer. From this sense of the value of the family tie sprung the rudiments of English justice. So strong is it, that his kinsfolk are the sole judges of the accused, for by their oath of his innocence or guilt he stands or falls. In their British home these judges will be a fixed number—the germ of the jury system. Other methods of appeal there are,—the duel and the ordeal. The first pleases the savage nature. Besides, is not the issue in the hand of God, and will not he award the victory to the just? This practice will be revived in Normandy, introduced by the Conqueror into England, appealed to in 1631, and abolished only in 1817. The second inspires confidence; for fire and water are deities, and surely the gods will not harm the innocent or screen the guilty? Therefore, be ready to lift masses of red-hot iron in your hands, or to pass through flame.

They hate cities. Then, as now, they must have independence and free air. Their villages are knots of farms. 'They live apart,' says Tacitus, 'each by himself, as woodside, plain, or fresh spring attracts him.' Each settlement must be isolated from its fellows. Each is jealously begirt by a belt of forest or fen, which parts it from neighboring communities,—a ring of common ground which none may take for his own, but which serves as the Golgotha where traitors and deserters meet their doom. This, it is said, is the special dwelling-place of the nix and the will-o'-the-wisp. Let none cross this death-line except he blow his horn; else he will be taken for a foe, and any man may lawfully slay him.

Around some moot-hill or sacred tree the whole community meet to administer justice and to legislate. Here the field is passed from seller to buyer by the delivery of a turf cut from its soil. Here the aggrieved may present his grievance. The 'elder men' state the 'customs,' and the evil-doer is sentenced to make pecuniary reparation. 'Eye for eye,' *life for life*, or for each fair damages,—is the yet unwritten code. The body and its members have each their legal price. Only treason, desertion, and poison involve capital punishment, and sentence is pronounced by the priest. Here, too, the king of the tribe—chosen from among the ablest of its chiefs—and the *Witan*, the Wise Men, who limit his jurisdiction, convene to settle questions of peace and war, or to transact other important affairs. The warriors, met in arms, express their approval by rattling their armor, their dissent by murmurs. Later, this assembly will be known as the Parliament of a great empire. Among the nobility, there is one who is the king's chosen confidant, the 'knower of secrets,' the 'counsellor.' In after times he will be known as the Prime Minister.

Knowledge was transmitted less by writing than by oral tradition, and almost wholly in the form of verse. There was a perpetual order of men, like the rhapsodists of ancient Greece and the bards of the Celtic tribes, who were at once poets and historians; whose exclusive employment it was to learn and repeat; wandering minstrels they were, travelling about from land to land, chanting to the people the fortunes of the latest battle or the exploits of their ancestors, a delightful link of union, loved and revered. The honors bestowed upon them were natural to an age in which reading and writing were mysteries. On arms, trinkets, amulets, and utensils, sometimes on the bark of trees, and on wooden tablets, for the purpose of memorials or of epistolary correspondence, were engraven certain wonderful characters called *runes*. By their potent spells, some runes, it was believed, could lull the tempest, stop the vessel in her course, divert the arrow in its flight, arrest the career of witches through the air, cause love or hatred, raise the dead, and extort from them the secrets of the spirit-world. Thus says the heroine of a Northern romance:

'Like a Virgin of the Shield I roved o'er the sea,
My arm was victorious, my valor was free;
By prowess, by runic enchantment and song,
I raised up the weak, and I beat down the strong.'

Would we know the soul of a people, let us seek it in their religion, the unseen spiritual fountain whence flow all their outward acts. In the beginning, we are told, were two worlds,—Niflheim, the frozen, and Muspel the burning. From the falling snow-flakes, quickened by the Unknown who sent the heated blast, was born Ymer the giant:

‘When Ymer lived
Was sand, nor sea,
Nor cooling wave;
No earth was found
Nor heaven above;
One chaos all,
And nowhere grass.’

Fallen asleep, from his arm-pits spring the frost-giants. A cow, born also of melting snow, feeds him with four milk-rivers. Whilst licking his perspiration from the rocks, there came at evening out of the stones a man’s hair, the second day a man’s head, and the third all the man was there. His name was Bure. His grandsons, Odin, Vile, and Ve, kill the giant Ymer. Dragging his body to the abyss of space, they form of it the visible universe; from his flesh, the land; from his bones, the mountains; from his hair, the forests; from his teeth and jaws, the stones and pebbles; from his blood, the ocean, in the midst of which they fix the earth; from his skull, the vaulted sky, raised and supported by a dwarf under each corner,—Austre, Westre, Nordre, and Sudre, from his brains, scattered in the air, the melancholy clouds; from his hair, trees and plants; from his eyebrows, a wall of defense against the giants. The flying sparks and red-hot flakes cast out of Muspel they placed in the heavens, and said: ‘Let there be light.’ Far in the North sits a giant, ‘the corpse swallower,’ clad with eagles’ plumes. When he spreads his wings for flight, the winds, which yet no mortal can discern, fan fire into flame, or lash the waves into foam. As the sons of Bor, ‘powerful and fair,’ were walking along the sea-beach, they found two trees, stately and graceful, and from them created the first human pair, man and woman,—Ask and Embla:

‘Odin gave spirit,
Høener gave mind,
Loder gave blood
And lovely hue.’

Nobler conception is this, than the Greek and Hebrew of clod or

stone. Diviner symbol is this of the trees, Ash and Elm, which, as they grow heavenward, show an unconscious attraction to that which is heavenly.

From the mould of Ymer are bred, as worms, the dwarfs, who by command of the gods receive human form and sense. Among the rocks, in the wild mountain-gorges they dwell. When we hear the echo from wood or hill or dale, there stands a dwarf who repeats our words. They had charge of the gold and precious minerals. With their aprons on, they hammered and smelted, and —

‘Rock crystals from sand and hard flint they made,
Which, tinged with the rosebud’s dye,
They cast into rubies and carbuncles red,
And hid them in cracks hard by.’

In the summer’s sun, when the mist hangs over the sea, may be seen, sitting on the surface of the water, the mermaid, combing her long golden hair with golden comb, or driving her snow-white cattle to the strands. No household prospers without its domestic spirit. Oft the favored maid finds in the morning that her kitchen is swept and the water brought. The buried treasure has its sleepless dragon, and the rivulet its water-sprite. The Swede delights to tell of *the boy of the stream*, who haunts the glassy brooks that steal through meadows green, and sits on the silver waves at moonlight, playing his harp to the elves who dance on the flowery margin.

We retain in the days of the week a compendium of the old English creed. A son and a daughter, lovely and graceful, are appointed by the Powers to journey round heaven each day with chariot and steeds, ‘to count years for men,’ each ever pursued by a ravenous wolf. The girl is Sol, the Sun, with meteor eyes and burning plumes; the boy is Maane, the Moon, with white fire laden. The festival-days consecrated to them were hence known as Sun’s-daeg and Moon’s-daeg, whence our *Sunday* and *Monday*. Reversing the mythology of the Greeks and Romans, the Teutons worshipped the sun as a female and the moon as a male deity, from an odd notion that if the latter were addressed as a goddess their wives would be their masters. The memory of Tyr, the dark, dread, daring, and intrepid one, is embalmed in *Tuesday*; his grandmother was an ugly giantess with nine hundred heads. Wodin, or Odin, survives in *Wednesday*. He does

not create the world, but arranges and governs it. He is the all-pervading spirit, the infinite wanderer. Two wolves lie at his feet; and on his shoulders sit two gifted ravens, which fly, on his behests, to the uttermost regions. He wakes the soul to thought, gives science and lore, inspires the song of the bard and the incantation of the sorcerer, blunts the point of the javelin, renders his warriors invisible; with a hero's heart and voice, tells the brave how by valor a man may become a god; explains to mortals their destiny here,—makes existence articulate and melodious. Incarnated as a seer and magician unknown thousands of years ago, he led the Teutonic throng into Scandinavia, across seas and rivers in a wonderful ship built by dwarfs, so marvellously constructed that, when they wished to land, it could be taken to pieces, rolled up, and put in the pocket. Our *Thursday* is Thor's day, son of Odin. He is a spring-god, subduing the frost-giants. The thunder is his wrath. The gathering of the black clouds is the drawing down of his angry brows. The bursting fire-bolt is the all-rending hammer flung from his hand. The peal,—that is the roll of his chariot over the mountain-tops. In his mansion are five hundred and forty halls. Freyja, the Venus of the North, in whom are beauty, grace, gentleness, the longings, joys, and tears of love, is incarnated in *Friday*. Sæter, an obscure water-deity, represented as standing upon a fish, with a bucket in his hand, is commemorated in *Saturday*. But beyond all the gods who are known and named, there is the feeling, the instinct, the presentiment of One who is unseen and imperishable, the everlasting Adamant lower than which the confused wreck of revolutionary things cannot fall:

‘Then comes another
Yet more mighty,
But Him dare I not
Venture to name;
Few look further forward
Than to the time
When Odin goes
To meet the wolf.’

Is not the last and highest consecration of all true religion an altar to ‘The Unknown God?’

All things exist in antagonism. No sooner are the giants created than the contest for empire begins. When Ymer is killed, the crimson flood drowns all save one, who with his wife escapes

in a chest, and so continues the hated race. Huge, shaggy, demoniac beings. Jotunheim is their home, distant, dark, chaotic. Long fight the gods against them,—the Fenriswolf, whose jaws they rend asunder; the great serpent, whom they drown in the sea; the evil Loke, whom they bind to the rocks, beneath a viper whose venom drops unceasingly on his face.

That which is born must die. Hel-gate stands ever ajar to receive the child with rosy cheeks, as him of the hoary locks and faltering step. When a great man dies,—his body, with his sword in his hand, his helmet on his head, his shield by his side, and his horse under him, is burned. The ashes are collected in an earthen vessel, which is then surrounded with huge stones; and over this is heaped the memorial mound. Brynhild, an untamed maiden in an epic of these Northern races, sets her love upon Sigurd; but, seeing him married, she causes his death, laughs once, puts on her golden corselet, pierces herself, and makes this last request:

‘Let in the plain be raised a pile so spacious, that for us all like room may be; let them burn the Hun (Sigurd) on the one side of me, on the other side my household slaves, with collars splendid, two at our heads and two hawks; let also lie between us both the keen-edged sword; . . . also five female thralls, eight male slaves of gentle birth fostered with me.’

Is it not a beautiful thought that the dead in the mounds are in a state of consciousness? Out of the depths seems to come the half-dumb stifled voice of the long-buried generations of our fathers, the echo in some sort of our own painful, fruitlessly inquiring wonder:

‘Now, children, lay us in two lofty graves
Down by the sea shore, near the deep-blue waves:
Their sounds shall to our souls be music sweet,
Singing our dirge as on the strand they beat.

When round the hills the pale moonlight is thrown,
And Midnight dews fall on the Bauta-stone,
We’ll sit, O Thorsten, in our rounded graves
And speak together o’er the gentle waves.’

When the daughter weeps for the death of her father, she allows no tear to fall on his corpse, lest his peace be troubled:

‘Whenever thou grieveest,
My coffin is within
As livid blood;
Whenever thou rejoiceest,
My coffin is within
Filled with fragrant roses.’

Even the gods must perish. Have we not seen that the germ of decay was in them from the beginning? They and their enemies, met in a world-embracing struggle, mutually destroy each other. Sun and stars, rock-built earth and crystal vault, sink into the bottomless, many-sounding sea.

But the end is also the beginning. There comes a new day, and a new heaven without rent or seam,—that is, the regeneration. There is no loss of souls, no more than of drops when the ocean yields its vapor to the touch of the summer's sun. Thought and affection are immortal. Death is but a vanishing from one realm into another—a triumph-hour of entrance through an arch of shadow into eternal day. Therefore, fall gloriously in battle, and you shall be at once transported to Valhal, the airy hall of Odin, upborne by spears, roofed with shields, and adorned with coats of mail. Fighting and feasting, which have been your fierce joys on earth, shall be lavished upon you in this supernal abode. Every day you shall have combats in the listed field,—the rush of steeds, the flash of swords, the shining of lances, and all the maddening din of conflict; helmets and bucklers riven, horses and riders overthrown, ghastly wounds exchanged: but at the setting of the sun you shall meet unscathed, victors and vanquished, around the festive board, to partake of the ample banquet and quaff full horns of beer and fragrant mead. Ragnar Lodbrok, shipwrecked on the English coast, is taken prisoner. Refusing to speak, he is thrown into a dungeon full of serpents, there to remain until he tells his name. The reptiles are powerless. The spectators say he must be a brave man indeed whom neither arms nor vipers can hurt. King Ælla, hearing this, orders his enchanted garment to be stripped off, and soon the serpents cling to him on all sides. Then Ragnar says, 'How the young cubs would roar if they knew what the old boar suffers!' But his eye is fixed upon Valhal's 'wide-flung door,' and he glories that no sigh shall disgrace his exit:

'Cease my strain! I hear a voice
From realms where martial souls rejoice;
I hear the maids¹ of slaughter call,
Who bid me hence to Odin's hall;
High-seated in their blest abodes,
I soon shall quaff the drink of gods.

¹ The Valkyries, Odin's maids, who are sent out to choose the fallen heroes, and to sway the combat.

The hours of life have glided by—
 I fall! but laughing will I die!
 The hours of life have glided by—
 I fall! but laughing will I die!’

For the virtuous who do not die in fight a more peaceful but less glorious Elysium is provided,—a resplendent golden palace, surrounded by verdant meads and shady groves and fields of spontaneous fertility.

After all, amid the raging of this warlike mood, it is virtue, on the whole, which is to be rewarded—vice which is to be punished. Far from the Sun, ever downward and northward, is the cave of the giantess Hel,—Naastrand, the strand of corpses. Here are the palace Anguish, the table Famine, the waiters Slowness and Delay, the threshold Precipice, the bed Care. Of serpents wattled together the cave is built, their heads turning inward and filling it with thick venom-streams, through which perjurers, murderers, and adulterers have to wade:

‘But all the horrors
 You cannot know,
 That Hel’s condemned endure;
 Sweet sins there
 Bitterly are punished,
 False pleasures
 Reap true pain.’

All life is figured as a tree. Ygdrasil, the Ash of existence, has its roots deep down in the kingdom of Hel, or Death; its trunk, towering heaven-high, spreads its branches over the universe. ‘Stately, with white dust strewn: thence come the dews that wet the dales; it stands ever green over Urd’s fountain.’ Under its root that stretches into the frozen North is Mimer’s well of wisdom. On its topmost bough sits an eagle; at its low-ermost base is the serpent Nidhug, with his reptile brood, that pierce it with their fangs and devour its substance. At its foot, in the Death-kingdom, sit three Norns, Fates, who water its roots from the Sacred Well, and weave, for mortals and immortals, the web of destiny. What similitude so true, so beautiful, so great?

Here is philosophy without abstractions or syllogisms; metaphysics that overleaps all categories; history woven of giant-dreams; poetry whose pictures are streams that flow together. What ideas are at the bottom of this chaos of untamed imaginings? The world is a warfare. In the sad inclement North,

amid pathless forests, bridgeless rivers, treacherous seas, inhospitable shores, the strife of frost and fire, man, as it were face to face with a beast of prey, feels profoundly that life is a battle, and, in the raging of his own moods, sees reflected the conflict of chaotic forces. Thor's far-sounding hammer, Jove's falling thunderbolt, Indra's lightning-spear, warring against the demons of the storm, till the light triumphs and the tempest rolls away, but ever returns to renew the combat,—what are they but types of the state of man, cast out of the troubled deep upon the mists of the unknown?

When the gods were unable to bind the Fenriswolf with steel or weight of mountains, because the one he snapped and the other he spurned with his heel, they put round his foot a limp band softer than silk or gossamer, and this held him; the more he struggled the stiffer it drew. So soft, so omnipotent is the ring of Fate. Balder, the good, the beautiful, the gentle, dies. All nature is searched for a remedy; but he is dead. His mother sends Hermod to seek or see him, who rides nine days and nights through a labyrinth of gloom. Arrived at the bridge with its golden roof, he is answered: 'Yes, Balder did pass here, but the Kingdom of the Dead is down yonder, far in the North.' Speeds the messenger on, leaps Hel-gate, sees Balder, and speaks with him; but Balder cannot be delivered: *Fate is inexorable*. The Valkyries are *choosers* of the fallen. Belief in Destiny is a fundamental point for this wild Teutonic soul. Perhaps it is so for all instinctive and heroic races, as for all earnest men,—a Mahomet, a Luther, a Napoleon, a Carlyle, an Emerson. The Greek, the Turk, the Arab, the Persian, accept the inevitable.

'On two days it stands not to run from thy grave,
The appointed and the unappointed day;
On the first, neither balm nor physicians can save,—
Nor thee, on the second, the Universe slay.'

Who can write the order of the variable winds? On every mortal who enters the hall of the firmament fall snow-storms of illusions, though the gods still sit on their thrones; and he may see, what all great thinkers have seen:

'We are such stuff as *dreams* are made of.'

In heart-to-heart communion with Nature, these old Northmen seem to have seen what meditation has taught all men in all ages,

that this world is only an appearance, a *mirage*, a shadow hung by the primal Reality on the bosom of the void Infinite. Thor, with two chosen friends, undertakes an expedition to Giant-land. Wandering at nightfall in a trackless forest, they espy a house, whose door is the whole breadth of one end. Here they lodge; one large hall, altogether empty. Suddenly, at dead of night, loud noises are heard. Thor grasps his hammer, and stands at the door, prepared for fight, while his terrified companions take refuge in a little closet. In the morning it turns out that the noise was merely the snoring of the giant Skrymer, who lay peaceably sleeping near by; that the house was only his *mitten*, thrown carelessly aside; that the door was its *wrist*, and the closet its *thumb*. Skrymer now joins the party in travel. Thor, however, suspicious of his ways, resolves to put an end to him as he slumbers beneath a large oak. Raising his hammer, he strikes a thunderbolt blow down into the giant's face, who wakes, rubs his face, and murmurs: 'Did a leaf fall?' Thor replies that they are just going to sleep, and goes to lie down under another oak. Again he strikes, as soon as Skrymer again sleeps, a more terrible blow than before; but the giant only asks: 'Did an acorn fall? How is it with you, Thor?' Thor, going hastily away, says that he has prematurely waked up. His third stroke, delivered with both hands, seems to dint deep into the giant's skull; but he simply checks his snore, strokes his chin, and inquires: 'Are there sparrows roosting in this tree? Was it moss they dropped? It seems to me time to arise and dress.' At Utgard-castle, their journey's end, they are invited to share in the games going on. To Thor, they hand a drinking-horn, explaining that it is a common feat to drain it at one draught,—none so wretched as not to exhaust it at the third. Long and fiercely, three times over, with increasing anger, he drinks; then finding that he has made hardly any impression, gives it back to the cup-bearer. 'Poor, weak child!' they say: 'Can you lift this gray cat? Our young men think it nothing but play.' Thor, with his whole god-like strength, can at the utmost bend the creature's back and lift one foot. 'Just as we expected,' say the Utgard people. 'The cat is large, but you are little.' 'Little as you call me,' says Thor, 'I challenge any one to wrestle with me, for now I am angry.' 'Why here is a toothless old woman who will wrestle you!' Heartily

ashamed, Thor seizes her—and is worsted. On their departure, the host escorts them politely a little way, and says to Thor: ‘Be not so mortified; you have been deceived. That race you witnessed was a race with *Thought*. That horn had one end in the *Ocean*: you did diminish it, as you will see when you come to the shore; this is the *ebb*. But who can drink the fathomless? And the cat,—ah! we were terror-stricken when we saw one paw off the floor; for that is the Midgard-serpent, which, tail in mouth, girds and keeps up the created world. As for the hag,—why, she was *Time*; and who, of men or gods, can prevail over her? Then, too, look at these *three glens*,—by the timely interposition of a mountain, your strokes made these! Adieu, and a word of advice,—better come no more to Jotunheim!’ Grim humor this, overlying a sublime, uncomplaining melancholy,—mirth resting upon sadness, as the rainbow upon the tempest. To this day it runs in the blood.

Therefore, the one thing needful, the everlasting duty, is to be brave. The right use of Fate is to bring our conduct up to the loftiness of nature. Let a man have not less the flow of the river, the expansion of the oak, the steadfastness of the hills. Heroism is the highest good. Over you, at each moment, hangs a threatening sword, which may in the next prove fatal. Life in itself has no value, and its ideal termination, to be kept constantly in view, is to fall heroically in fight. The *Choosers* will lead you to the *Hall of Odin*, only the base and slavish being thrust elsewhither:

‘The coward thinks to live forever,
If he avoid the weapon’s reach;
But Age, which overtakes at last,
Twines his gray hair with pain and shame.’

Hold to your purpose with the tug of gravitation, believing that you can shun no danger that is appointed nor incur one that is not. Thus did these old Northmen. Silent and indomitable,—

‘In the prow with head uplifted
Stood the chief like wrathful Thor;
Through his locks the snow-flakes drifted,
Bleached their hue from gold to hoar;
Mid the crash of mast and rafter
Norsemen leaped through death with laughter,
Up through Valhal’s wide-flung door.’

Old kings, about to die, had their bodies laid in a ship, the ship sent forth with sails set, and a slow fire burning it; that they might be buried at once in the sky and in the sea!

Wild and bloody was this valor of the Northmen. True, but they were ferocious—bloody-minded. Murder was their trade, and hence their pleasure. ‘Lord, deliver us from the fury of the Jutes,’ says an ancient litany. The ceremonials of religion assumed a cruel and sanguinary character. Prisoners taken in battle were sacrificed by the victors, sometimes subjects by their kings, and even children by their parents. Bodies white and huge, stomachs ravenous. Six meals a day barely sufficed. The heroes of Valhal gorge themselves upon the flesh of a boar which is cooked every morning, but becomes whole again every night. Lovers of gambling and strong drink. Seated on their stools, by the light of the torch, they listened to battle-songs and heroic legends as they drank their ale, while ‘the lordly hall thundered, and the ale was spilled.’ In Paradise, the elect drink from a river of ale! ‘Disputes,’ says Tacitus, ‘as will be the case with people in liquor, frequently arise, and are seldom confined to opprobrious epithets. The quarrel generally ends in a scene of blood.’ Here are the germs of nineteenth-century vices. Intrepid in war, in peace they lie by the fireside, sluggish and dirty, eating and drinking.

Established in England, they have brought with them their customs, sentiments, and habits. They are still gluttonous, untamed, butcherly. To dance among naked swords is their recreation. To drink is their necessity. Later on, they quarrel about the amount each shall drink from the common cup, and the Archbishop puts pegs in the vessel, that each thirsty soul shall take no more than his just proportion.

Every man is obliged to appear ready-armed, to repel predatory bands. A hundred years measure the reign of fourteen kings, seven of whom are slain and six deposed. King Ælla’s ribs are divided from his spine, his lungs drawn out, and salt thrown into his wounds. Attendants who are preparing a royal banquet are seized, their heads and limbs severed, placed in vessels of wine, mead, ale, and cider, with a message to the king: ‘If you go to your farm, you will find there plenty of salt meat, but you will do well to carry more with you.’

They have made one remove from barbarism. Once murder was expiated, as all other crimes, by blows (from five to a thousand), the gift of a female to the offended party, or a fine of gold; now, by money-fines only. Here, by implication, in the Saxon Code of laws, is the social status of the sixth century. Mark with what minutiae it seeks to repress the irruptive tendencies of a restive and disordered society:

‘These are the Laws King Ethelbert established in Augustine’s day:

2. If the king his people to him call, and any one to them harm does, two fines shall be paid, and to the king 50 shillings.

8. If in the king’s town any one a man slay, 50 shillings shall be paid.

13. If any one in an earl’s town a man kills, 12 shillings shall be paid.

19. If a highway robbery be committed, 6 shillings shall be paid.

35. If bones bare become, 3 shillings shall be paid.

36. If bones bitten are, 4 shillings shall be paid.

39. If an ear be cut off, 12 shillings shall be paid.

44. If an eye be gouged out, 50 shillings shall be paid.

55. For every nail, 1 shilling.

57. If a man beat another with the fist on the nose, 3 shillings.

64. If a thigh be broken, 12 shillings shall be paid; if he halt become, then shall be summoned friends who arbitrate.

65. If a rib broken be, 3 shillings shall be paid.

68. If a foot be cut off, 50 shillings shall compensate.

69. If the large toe be cut off, 10 shillings shall compensate.

70. For every other toe, half the sum as has been said for the fingers.

81. If any one take a maiden by force, he shall pay the owner 50 shillings; and afterwards buy her according to the owner’s will.’

Formerly, too, they slew themselves, dying as they had lived—in blood. Now, in the eleventh century, an earl, about to die of disease but unable wholly to repress the ferocious instinct, exclaims:

‘What a shame for me not to have been permitted to die in so many battles, and to end thus by a cow’s death. At least put on my breast-plate, gird on my sword, set my helmet on my head, my shield in my left hand, my battle-axe in my right, so that a stout warrior like myself may die as a warrior.’

But in this human animal—let it not be forgotten—abide noble dispositions, which will wax nobler as he climbs the heights of purer vision. In manners, severe; in inclinations, grave; valorous and liberty-loving. If he is cruel, he refuses to be shackled. In his own home, he is his own master. No Feudalism yet—only a voluntary subordination to a leader. Required to associate himself with a superior, he chooses him as a friend, and follows him to the death. ‘He is infamous as long as he lives, who returns from the field of battle without his chief.’

Amid the savagery of barbarian life, he feels no sentiment stronger than friendship. An exile, waking from his dream of the long ago, says:

‘In blithe habits full oft we, too, agreed that naught else should divide us except death alone; at length this is changed, and, as if it had never been, is now our friendship. To endure enmities man orders me to dwell in the bowers of the forest, under the oak tree in this earthly cave. Cold is this earth-dwelling; I am quite wearied out. Dim are the dells, high up are the mountains, a bitter city of twigs, with briars overgrown, a joyless abode. . . . My friends are in the earth; those loved in life,—the tomb holds them. The grave is guarding, while I above alone am going. Under the oak-tree, beyond this earth-cave,—there I must sit the long summer day.’

He is over-brave. He places his happiness in battle and his beauty in death. The coward is drowned in the mud under a hurdle, or is immolated.

The true home-life, out of which are the issues of national life, is foreshadowed by the respect with which woman is treated. She inherits property and bequeaths it; associates with the men at their feasts, and is respected. The law surrounds her with guarantees, and accords her protection. The freeman who presses the finger of a freewoman, is liable to a fine of six hundred pence; of twelve hundred, if he touches the arm. ‘Almost alone among the barbarians,’ says Tacitus, ‘they are content with one wife’; then, perhaps with a bitter thought of Rome, ‘No one in Germany laughs at vice, nor do they call it the fashion to corrupt and be corrupted.’ A chivalric sense of delicacy, indeed, we may not expect. She attends to the indoor and outdoor work, while her husband dozes in a half stupor by the fire. His companion in war, she is his drudge in peace. As little may we look for the finer instincts of the womanly nature. Brynhild compels her suitors to contend with her in the games of spear-throwing, leaping, and stone-hurling, under penalty of death in case of defeat. Atle’s wife kills her children, and one day, on his return from the carnage, gives him their hearts to eat, served in honey, and laughs as she tells him on what he has fed. Devotion there is, stronger than life or death, and grief too deep for tears. With a fierce kind of joy, the maid expires on the grave of her lover. Balder’s wife accompanies him to the Death-kingdom; and while he sends his ring to Odin, she sends as final remembrance her *thimble* to Freyja. Loke’s wife stands by his side, and receives the venom-drops, as they fall, in a cup which she empties as often as it is filled.

The Celt is gay, emotional, easily elevated and as easily depressed. He knows not how to plod, would leap to results, has a passion for color and form. The Teuton is steady, is not

dazzled by show, looks more to the inner fact of things. It inspires the one to be addressed in the words of Napoleon,—‘Soldiers, from the summits of yonder Pyramids, forty ages behold you;’ it nerves the other to be told in the severe phrase of Nelson,—‘England expects every man to do his duty.’ What sentiment is to the one, interest is to the other.

If, again, the Teuton has less of brilliancy than the Norman, he has more of patient strength. If he is less passionate, he is more reflective. If he is less voluble, he has the deep conviction and the indomitable will that have preserved his continuity through all revolutionary changes, and made him the most irresistible force in European politics. If he is less the artist of the beautiful, he is more inclined to the serious and sublime. Did ever any people form so tragic a conception of life, get so free and direct a glance into the deeps of thought, or banish so completely from its dreams the sweetness of enjoyment and the softness of pleasure? Here is the shadow, of which the Christian ideal is the substance.

Do but consider the singular adaptation of this soil for the reception of the new faith. Back in the days of heathendom we may find the first suggestion of the spirit which led to the Reformation of an after age—the revolt against the sensuous worship of Rome—when Tacitus says of the old Germanic tribes that they do not consider it consistent with the grandeur of celestial beings to confine the gods within walls, or to liken them to the form of any human countenance. They consecrate woods and groves, and they apply the names of deities to the abstraction which they see only with the spiritual eye. This feeling of a mysterious infinity, of the dark Beyond, this sincerity of personal and original sentiment, predisposes the mind to Christianity; it makes the supreme distinction between races, as between great souls and little souls. Gregory had seen slaves in the market at Rome, and their faces were beautiful. He was told they were heathen boys from the Isle of Britain. Sorry to think that forms so fair should have no light within, he asked what was the name of their nation. ‘*Angles*,’ he was told. ‘*Angles!*’ said Gregory; ‘they have the faces of *Angels*, and they ought to be made fellow-heirs of the Angels in Heaven. But of what prov-

¹ The Celt is the spiritual progenitor of the Frenchman.

ince are they?' '*Deira*,' said the merchant. '*De ira!*' said Gregory; 'then they must be delivered from the wrath'—in Latin *de ira*—'of God.' 'And what is the name of their king?' '*Ælla*.' '*Ælla!* then *Alleluia* shall be sung in his land.' Presently Roman missionaries bearing a silver cross with an image of Christ came in procession chanting a litany. In the council of the king, the High-Priest of Odin declared that the old gods were powerless:

'For there is no man in thy land, O King, who hath served all our gods more truly than I, yet there be many who are richer and greater, and to whom thou showest more favor; whereas, if our gods were good for anything, they would rather forewarn me who have been so zealous to serve them. Wherefore let us hearken to what these men say, and learn what their law is; and if we find it to be better than our own, let us serve their God and worship Him.'

This is the profit-and-loss estimate—not yet extinct among us—of things divine, contracting the horizon of life within the narrow circle of material interests. But in that assembly of wise men was another, of finer mould, whose eyes, lifted from the dust, could see the stars. Then a chief rose and said:

'You remember, it may be, O King, that which sometimes happens in winter when you are seated at table with your earls and thanes. Your fire is lighted, and your hall warmed, and without is rain, snow, and storm. Then comes a swallow flying across the hall; he enters by one door and leaves by another. The brief moment while he is within is pleasant to him; he feels not rain nor cheerless winter weather; but the moment is brief,—the bird flies away in the twinkling of an eye, and he passes from winter to winter. Such, methinks, is the life of man on earth, compared with the uncertain time beyond. It appears for a while; but what is the time which comes after—the time which was before? We know not. If then, this new doctrine may teach us somewhat of greater certainty—whence man cometh and whither he goeth—it were well that we should regard it.'¹

Henceforth the war-gods are blotted out, the passions which created them wane; manly and moral instincts increase; new ideas take root; and a literature begins whose inspiration and soul, even to the latest generation, while it images the mingled and many-colored web of mortal experience, are essentially the God-idea—this longing after an Infinite which sense cannot touch, but reverence alone can feel—this wonder and sorrow concerning life and death which are the inheritance of the Saxon soul from the days of its first sea-kings.

¹ 'In this year (597),' says the Chronicle, 'Gregorius the Pope sent into Britain Augustinus with very many monks who *gospelled* God's word to the English folk.' That is, they 'preached' or 'taught,' the *Gospel*—the *good spell* or *tale*, the *good news* of what God had done for others and would do for them.

Though the Christian faith had not failed among the Britons of Wales, the British priests were not likely to try to convert their mortal enemies, the Anglo-Saxons, nor were the latter likely to listen to them. The Scots (Irish) helped much in the good work afterwards, but had nothing to do with it in the beginning.

Results.—The English people, it is thus seen, is a composite nation, uniting in its children the elements which, separately, in the intellectual development of Europe, have shown themselves most efficient in all great and worthy achievements. But of this British, Roman, Saxon, Danish, Norman blood, in fulfilment of the decrees of an overruling Providence, is formed the English nation—a nation that has preserved its free spirit under foreign domination and domestic oppression—a nation that has upheld, with ever increasing strength, the principle that power is derived from the governed for the general good—a nation that in literature and life has furnished the moral pioneers and teachers of the world. Its body, its substance, is Saxon, which receives first the Celt, with his bold imagination and self-sacrificing zeal; then the Dane, with his tacit rage and adventurous maritime spirit; then the Norman, with his flexible genius, his trickery, his subtlety, his drawing-room polish, and his keen sense of enjoyment. Herein consists its true greatness, which comes of no transfusion,—its energetic sense of truth, its assertion of the right of individual liberty, its resolute habit of looking to the end, its deep power of love and its grand power of will.

We may therefore expect from this blending of diverse parts a many-sided intellectual progress and a wide variety of individual character,—the multifariousness of Shakespeare, the austerity of Milton, the materialism of Spencer, the transcendentalism of Emerson, the grace of Addison, the solidity of Johnson, the oddity of Swift, the sadness and madness of Byron.

CHAPTER II.

FORMING OF THE LANGUAGE.

Words are the sounds of the heart.—*Chinese Proverb.*

Words are the only things that live forever.—*Hazlitt.*

Definition.—Speech is the utterance of sounds which usage has made the representatives of ideas. When, in any community, the same sounds are customarily associated with the same ideas, the expression of these sounds by the speaker renders his ideas intelligible to the hearer.

Man possesses in the organs of utterance—though he seldom thinks of it, or forgets the blessing because it is given—a musical instrument which is at once a harp, an organ, and a flute; an instrument on which Nature gives him the mastery of a finished performer. *How* its notes are struck, so as to express in coördination the many-colored world without and the shadow-world within, is the mystery of language. This, however, is the observed phenomenon: a person having a thought, and wishing to awaken a corresponding thought in the mind of another, emits, at stated intervals, a portion of his breath, modified by certain movements of the vocal organs; these movements are transmitted to the atmosphere, and thence to the ear of the listener, producing there vibrations identical with the original; then, through the agency of instinct, memory, and invention, the two have the same thought. A result reached without any conscious effort, and therefore seemingly simple and commonplace, yet seen, on reflection, to be truly wonderful. Short as is the reach of its pulse, vanishing as are its undulations, by that fluid air, articulated into living words, man graves on the rock or prints in the book the records of his outward history and his inner soul, in symbols more enduring than Babylonian palace or Egyptian pyramid.

Origin.—Whether man was the special creation of God or was developed from inarticulate creatures, it would seem evident

that speech, *in its inception*, like the bark of a dog, is a natural product, and hence originates in the instinct divinely implanted, directly, or indirectly, in man's nature to communicate thought.¹ The Providence that provided soil, fuel, minerals, and vegetables, to meet his physical needs, and religion to meet his spiritual demands, would, it is reasonable to expect, furnish at the outset suitable means of communication.

We must suppose, however, that what is known to be true in other directions of his development will be found to be true in this,—an imperfect beginning and a gradual ascent. Clothing began with leaves and bark, with skins of wild animals and the like; shelter was first a hole in the ground, or the hollow of a tree; tools were first of bone, wood, or stone: but in time the sheltering cave became a nest of interwoven branches, this, in many ages, a log hut, and this, by improvement in shape, material, and size, after centuries of toil, a stately palace; in long ages of cultivation, dress-making and tool-making became arts, each giving us forms of elegance and beauty. When first the infant is moved to express itself to others, it does so by motions or natural cries, then by simple words of one syllable—very few in number, for its ideas are few—progressing slowly in its powers of utterance, yet increasing its vocabulary as intelligence expands.

So, by analogy, was it with man. His beginning was less a song or a poem than a cry or gesture. His first words, like those of the child, were probably monosyllables, and, like those of the child or savage, referred mainly to his bodily wants and to surrounding objects which impressed him strongly.

The origin of speech—so mysterious is the power—excited some speculation even among the rude primeval races. The Esthonians tell that the Aged One, as they call the Deity, placed on the fire a kettle of water, from the hissing and bubbling of which the various nations learned their languages; that is, by imitating these vague sounds, they modulated them into intelligible utterances. The Australians explain the gift of speech by saying that people had eaten an old woman, named Wururi, who

¹ Man is not less divine, nor his speech less God-given, on the supposition that he has been evolved from lower organisms: for still an adequate Cause—a Supreme Intelligence—must have impressed such attributes upon primordial matter as to make such evolution possible.

went about at night quenching fires with a damp stick. *Wururi* is supposed to mean the damp night-wind, and the languages learned from devouring her are the guttural, or wind-like, reproduction of natural sounds made by the material objects around them. There is the beautiful legend that Wammemunume, the god of song, descended into a sacred wood, and there played and sang. The birds learned the prelude of the song; the listening trees, their rustle; the streams, their ripple and roar; and the winds, their shrill tones and desolate moans: but the fish remained dumb, because, though they protruded their heads, as far as the eyes, out of the water, their ears continued under water, and they could only imitate the motion of the god's mouth. Man alone grasped it all, and so his song pierces down into the depths of the heart and up into the home of the gods.

Development.—Two principles have been especially active in the growth of speech:

1. *Onomatopœia*, or *sound-imitation*.—Thus the cry of a cat to children of different nationalities is *e-yow*; the watch is *tick-tick*. Thus, also, the interjection *ah* or *ach* gives the root *aka* (Sanskrit), *acan* (Anglo-Saxon), and thence our *ache*; whence also *anxious*, *anguish*, and *agony*. The root *mur* in *murmur*, implying the rush of water-drops, gives *myriad*. The Australian, imitating the noise it makes, calls the frog *kong-kung*. The North American Indian, repeating the hooting of the bird, calls the owl *kos-kos-koo-oo*, a verbal sign which immediately suggests to all who have heard it, the thing signified. Several tribes on the coast of New Guinea give names to their children in imitation of the first sound the child utters. Familiar instances of inventing names by imitating natural sounds, are *whip-poor-will*, *pee-wee*, *bob-white*, *buzz*, *whiz*, *hiss*, *snap*, *snarl*, *bang*, *roar*. There is the story of the Englishman who, wanting to know the nature of the meat on his plate at a Chinese entertainment, turned to the native servant behind him, and, pointing to the dish, inquired, '*Quack, quack?*' The Chinaman replied, '*Bow-wow.*' Thus the two were mutually intelligible, though they understood not a word of each other's language.

2. *Metaphor*, or *the use of words in new applications*.—When a strange object is seen, men are not satisfied till they have heard its name. If it has none, as would happen in the

first settlement of a country, they proceed to give it one; and in doing so, the prevailing tendency, as has been observed from the earliest times, is to use the name of some *known* object nearly resembling the one to be named. To combine and reapply old names is easier than to invent new ones; and, wherever this is done, the result is a *metaphor*. Thus the French, on the first introduction of the potato, called it, 'the apple of the earth.' Captain Erskine relates that in the Fiji Islands, man, dressed and prepared for food, is known as 'long pig'; human flesh and pork being the two staple articles of food, and the natural pig being the *shorter*. The New Zealanders called their first horses 'large dogs'; and the Highlanders styled their first donkey a 'large hare.' The Kaffirs called the parasol 'a cloud,' transferring to the new object a name belonging to one which resembled it somewhat in figure and effect. Among the Malays, the sun is *matu-ari*, literally, 'the eye of day'; the ankle is *mata-kaki*, 'the eye of the foot'; and the key is 'child of the lock.'

These transfers, it is seen, are made between one material substance and another; but frequently they are made between matter and spirit. Man's earliest words, like the child's, related, not to his soul, but to his body and material objects. As he advanced to consider and explain thinking, feeling, and willing, his own yearnings and passions, he could neither understand them himself nor make them intelligible to others, except by reference to things which he could see, hear, taste, smell, or touch,—that is, by the use of old terms in a new sense. The ideal, the spiritual, the mental, is, of itself, dim, shadowy, and unseen, and is *incapable of being known at all* but by a material image that shall make it in some sort visible, as a diagram illustrates a truth in geometry. Thus our 'soul'—German *seele*—is derived from the same root as the word 'sea.' The word 'reason' is supposed to be connected with the Greek *rheo*, 'I flow.' 'Consider,' from the Latin *considerare*, means 'to fix the eyes on the stars'; 'deliberate,' from *deliberare*, 'to weigh.' The Greek for the soul of man means 'wind,' and the Hebrew 'breath.'

Some of the metaphors in use among savages are highly picturesque. The Malays signify affront by 'charcoal on the face'; malice by 'rust of the heart'; impudence by 'face of board'; sincerity by 'white heart.' Scarcely less ingenious are

the metaphors in *Chinese*. Capricious is expressed by 'three mornings, four evenings'; cunning speech by 'convenient hind-teeth' persuasive speech by 'convenient front-teeth'; disagreement by 'you east, I west.'

Now, when the same word is applied successively to different objects, the effect is similar to adding so many new words to the language, making it more copious and rich. Mark the various ways in which the shining of the sun is here represented:

'And all his splendor *floods* the towered walls.'
 'Sow'd the earth with *orient pearl*.'
 'With *rosy* fingers *unbarred the gates of light*.'
 'Each purple peak, each flinty spire,
 Was *bathed in floods* of living fire.'
 'A *dazzling deluge* reigns.'
 'The western *waves* of ebbing day
 Roll'd o'er the glen their level way.'
 'The *sanguine* sunrise, with his *meteor eyes*,
 And his *burning plumes* outspread.'

Thus language, in its *entirety*, is not given, but grows with the growth of thought and experience. New ideas spring up which require new forms of expression. New inventions in art or new discoveries in science require new terms. When moral and spiritual forces are especially active, the language of a people is required to utter new truths, and so is extended and multiplied, as the channel of a river is deepened and widened by increasing the volume of the waters which flow through it.

It is to be observed, further, that while an articulate word, addressed to the *ear*, is the sign of an idea, a written word, merely exhibiting the same thing to the *eye*, is but the sign of this sign—an artificial dress. Language, therefore, in its proper nature, consists not of strokes made by the pen, nor of marks made in any other way, but of *sounds* uttered by the voice and the organs of articulation, being to man somewhat as neighing is to a horse or squealing to a pig. Many languages have existed that never were written, and those that in time have come to be written, first existed in an unwritten state.

Diversities.—The following is a specimen of the English tongue, as spoken and written in London, in the year 1300:

Ac heo and hi beoth ifuled mid sunnen, and so ich habbe iseid to thilke
 But she they are filled with sins, I have said that
 levedy uche day; answereth, men, nis it nought so?
 lady each answer, is not

Three hundred years later, our Shakespeare wrote:

‘Romans, Country-men and Louers, heare mee for my cause, and be silent, that you may heare. Beleeue mee for mine Honor, and have respect to mine Honor, that you may beleeue. Censure mee in your Wisdom, and awake your Senses, that you may the better Judge. If there be any in this Assembly, any deere Friend of *Cæsar’s*, to him I say that *Brutus’* love to *Cæsar* was no less than his.’

From these illustrations, the student will see, as other examples may have suggested, that our language had not always its present form; and this is only a particular instance of the changes that are always going on, everywhere. Thus the language of a people in one age may become unintelligible to their descendants in another: or, if a people have parted company, one portion going forth to new seats, while the other remained in the old; or, if both have travelled on, separating continually from one another, either section may cease to be understood by the other, and their once common speech, by the gradual unfolding of differences, may be separated into two. Thus the Celts in Britain were, in time, unable to communicate with the Celts in Gaul; and the Britons in Wales could no longer converse with the Britons in Cornwall, from whom they were separated by the intrusion of a hostile tribe, like a wedge, between them. Thus the Russian, and German, and Icelandic, and Greek, and Latin, and Persian, and French, and English, were all produced from one language, spoken by the common ancestors of these nations, when they were living together as an undivided family; and the multitude of human languages—certainly not fewer than seven hundred and fifty in number—sprang, if not from one, from two or three original tongues. The causes of this divergence are:

1. *Difference of occupation*.—The vocabulary of a farmer must differ from that of a mariner, for his subjects of thought are different. When the *Aryans* distributed themselves over the poetic hills of Italy and Greece, they became, in the former, a nation of warriors—wars engrossing their thoughts for seven hundred years; in the latter, a nation of warriors, statesmen, orators, historians, poets, critics, painters, sculptors, architects, philosophers; and this difference was evermore at work to make two the languages that once were one. Language, in the former, became copious in terms expressive of things *political*; in the latter, it became *universal*, like the ideas for which it stood.

2. *Difference of progress in the sciences and the arts*.—New

facts or new ideas require new words. Wherever any science is progressive, there must be a corresponding progress in its forms of expression. Any considerable change in society—in its government, religion, or habits—demands the invention of words which in a former period were not required.

3. *Difference of geographical position.*—When a people with a common tongue is divided into separate tribes by emigration, or by any of the causes which break up large nations into smaller fragments, their speeches become distinct, as differences of character are developed, or in the degree in which communication between them is interrupted. (a.) One branch comes into contact with new races or objects which the other does not encounter, and so upon the old stock engrafts numerous words which the other does not. (b.) In one branch a word will perish, or be thrust out of general use, but live on in the other. For example, the words *snag*, *bluff*, *slick*, and others, would now be lost to the English tongue, were it not for the American branch of the English-speaking race. (c.) Words will gradually acquire a different meaning in one branch from what they have in another. Thus, in Northumberland, they ‘shear’ their *wheat*; here, we ‘shear’ our *sheep*. (d.) The pronunciation and spelling of the same word will, in one, be different from what it is in the other. Thus the Germans and the English, using the very same word, pronounce and spell it,—the former, ‘fowl’; the latter, ‘vogel.’ (e.) The language of one section may remain stationary, because their ideas remain so; while that of the other is kept in motion, because their understanding is ever advancing, and their knowledge is ever increasing.

4. *Difference of climate.*—Influences of climate and soil account, in large measure, for the harsh and guttural sounds muttered by those who live in moist or cold mountainous regions, and the soft and liquid tones of those who live in fertile plains under a more genial sky. Thus Byron:

‘I love the language, that soft bastard Latin,
Which melts like kisses from a female mouth,
And sounds as if it should be writ on satin,
With syllables that *breathe* of the *sweet* South.
And gentle liquids gliding all so pat in,
That not a single accent seems uncouth,
Like our *harsh*, *northern*, *whistling*, *grunting*, *guttural*,
Which we’re obliged to *hiss*, and *spit* and *sputter* all.’

Physical circumstances reach far in their effects, not alone upon the organs of speech, but upon the character as well. It is not too much to assert that the profound differences which are manifest between the German races on the one side, heavy, bent on fighting, prone to drunkenness and gluttony, and the Greek and Latin races on the other, ready, flexible, inquisitive, artistic, loving conversations and tales of adventure,—arise chiefly from the difference between the countries in which they are settled. Religion, to the Greek, is an epic; to the Teuton, a tragedy.

Dialects.—Whenever a homogeneous people is divided into separate and unconnected tribes by emigration or local causes, the speeches of the different members of the race become, therefore, more or less distinct; and each, in this changed condition, is called a dialect: in other words, a dialect is a branch of a parent language, with such alterations as time or revolution may have introduced among descendants of the same people, living in separate or remote situations. Dialects, then, are those forms of speech which have a certain character of their own by which they are distinguished from one another, yet a common character by which they are allied to one another and hence to some mother tongue, just as indigo and sky-blue are different shades of the same color. Their *common* character will be shown: first, by their similar grammatical forms, such as the endings of nouns, verbs, and the like; second, by their having many of the most common and most necessary words essentially the same. Thus, when the Teutons settled in the western provinces of the Roman Empire, there arose a new state of things, which was neither Roman nor Teutonic, but a combination of both. Being much fewer in number, the conquerors adopted the religion, and a great deal of the laws and manners, and especially the language of the conquered. At this time, the common language of Spain, Italy, and Gaul, was *Latin*—not quite the same as the earlier Latin of Cicero, and, no doubt, more or less different in different localities. As the Germans had to learn this Latin in order to get on with the people, many German words crept into it, and it naturally became still more unlike what it had been. At last, men began to understand that quite new languages had really grown up. Thus, from the mixture of the Teutonic settlers with the Roman inhab-

itants, there slowly arose the modern nations of Spain, Italy, and France, and from the mixture of their languages, there gradually sprung the modern *Spanish*, *Italian*, and *French*,—each, when considered with reference to the Latin, called a *dialect*; but viewed by itself, as distinct from either of the others, a *language*. These newly formed languages, derived by more or less direct processes from one and the same ancient tongue—the Roman Latin—are known as the *Romance* tongues. Their homogeneity is clearly traceable in the following versions of the first verse, first chapter, of *St. John*:

Latin.—In principio (*beginning*) erat (*was*) Verbum (*Word*), et (*and*) Verbum erat apud (*with*) Deum (*God*), et Deus erat Verbum.

Italian.—Nel principio la Parola era, e la Parola era appo Iddio, e la Parola era Dio.

French.—Au commencement était la Parole, et la Parole était avec Dieu, et cette Parole était Dieu.

Spanish.—En el principio era el Verbo, y el Verbo estaba con Dios, y el Verbo era Dios.

Again, any of these, as split up into different local forms or provincial idioms, may be regarded as composed of an aggregate of dialects proper; for every language is marked by certain peculiarities in different quarters of the same country. Thus two hundred years ago, a man in London would say, ‘I would eat more cheese, if I had it.’ One in the Northern counties would have said, ‘Ay sud eat mare cheese, gin ay had it.’ The Western man said, ‘Chud eat more cheese, and chad it.’ The rustic Westmorelander, to the question, ‘How far is it?’ replies, ‘Why, like it garly nigh like to four miles like.’ The conjugation of the Southern slave is, ‘I was done gone, you was done gone, he was done gone.’

We are not, however, to think of a dialect as a vulgar form of the classical or literary speech, and its modes of expression as violations of grammar, but rather as one of the forms in which language, passing through its successive phases, once existed. Here and there its departures from what we have been used to, may be set down to the ignorance or stupidity of the speaker. But much oftener its words, its singular combinations, which appear to us as barbarisms, were once reputable, employed by all, and happen to have found an abiding place in certain districts which have not kept abreast with the advances which the language has made. Thus, in parts of England, for ‘we sing,’ ‘ye sing,’ ‘they sing,’ they yet use the plurals ‘we singen,’ ‘ye

singen,' 'they singen,'—a mode of declension which arose in the time of Chaucer, and was constantly employed by Spenser. We are told, indeed, that this form of the plural is still retained in parts of Maryland. It is not very uncommon, in the country, to hear one say, 'I'm *afeard*,' or 'I'll *ax* him,' or 'the price *riz* yesterday,' or 'I'll tell *ye*'; and we are apt to esteem such phrases violations of the primary rules of grammar, but they are the forms which the words once regularly and grammatically assumed. An old Dative, *tham*, from *tha*, is still in use among our lower orders; as, 'Look at *them* boys.' *Ourn* for *ours*, and *hern* for *hers*, which are not infrequent among us, were freely employed by Wycliffe, who wrote standard English. We are not therefore to conclude that these forms are good English now: for in writing or speaking we are bound to conform to present use and custom, just as in buying or selling we are to use the form of money that is circulating, not that which was current in the Revolution, or which has long been withdrawn from circulation.

Idioms.—Nations, like individuals, have their *peculiar* ideas; and, since the sign must correspond to the thing signified, these peculiar ideas become the *genius* of their language. The *idioms*¹ of a given tongue are the modes of expression in harmony with its genius. For example:

Arma virumque cano, Trojæ qui primus ab oris Italiam, fato
Arms man-and, (I)-sing (of)-Troy who first from coasts (to)-Italy (by)-fate
 profugus, Laviniaque venit litora.—*Virgil.*
(an)-exile Lavinian-and came shores.

Such an arrangement, though natural to Latin, is quite foreign to English:

I sing of arms, and the man who first from the coasts of Troy, by fate an exile, came to Italy and the Lavinian shores.

That order and diction are idiomatic which are used *habitually*,—in conversation or familiar letters. Thus, when Dr. Johnson said of the *Rehearsal*, 'It has not wit enough to keep it sweet,' he was idiomatic; but when, after a moment's reflection, he expressed it, 'It has not sufficient virtue to preserve it from putrefaction,' he was *unidiomatic*. When he wrote, 'I bore the diminution of my riches without any outrages of sorrow or pusillanimity of dejection,' he used a style in which no one quarrels, makes love, or

¹ From the Greek, meaning *proper* or *peculiar*.

thinks. The native idiom is forcibly distinguished from the foreign in the following:

Idiomatic.—Then Apollyon straddled quite over the whole breadth of the way, and said, I am void of fear in this matter: prepare thyself to die; for I swear by my infernal Den that thou shalt go no further: here will I spill thy soul.—*Pilgrim's Progress*.

Unidiomatic.—Unquestionably, benignity and commiseration shall contingence all the diuturnity of my vitality, and I will eternalize my habitude in the metropolis of nature.—*Psalms xxxiii, 6 (a modern version)*.

It is remarked by De Quincey, that ‘the pure idiom of our mother-tongue survives only amongst our women and children; not, heaven knows, amongst our women who write books.’ ‘Would you desire at this day,’ he continues, ‘to read our noble language in its native beauty, picturesque form, idiomatic propriety, racy in its phraseology, delicate yet sinewy in its composition,—steal the mail-bags, and break open all the letters in female handwriting.’

It need not be a matter of surprise, therefore, that those writers who are most idiomatic—as Bunyan, Shakespeare, Longfellow—are the most popular. They are understood with least effort.

Indo-European.—On noticing how closely our word *house* resembles the German *haus*, or the English *thou hast* the German *du hast*, the reader might suspect, without other evidence than this *likeness* in words and in grammar, that the two languages are *brothers* and *sisters*. By extending this comparison to a large number of languages, scholars have shown that nearly all the languages in Europe, with a part of those in Asia, are related by having descended from a common parent, namely a language spoken somewhere between the Indus and the Euphrates. These kindred tongues are therefore called the *Indo-European*,¹ or the *Aryan*² family. This family is subdivided into several groups, each group consisting of those languages which most resemble one another:

1. *Celtic*, preserved to us chiefly in two dialects,—the *Welsh*, whose oldest literature extends back to the sixth century; and the *Irish*, with a literature dating from the fifth.

2. *Latin*, containing the dialects sprung from it, or the *Romance* (modified Roman) languages,—*Italian*, *French*, *Spanish*, and *Portuguese*. Its oldest literary records date from 300 B.C.

¹ Referring to the territorial position and the geographical connection of the races which speak the languages it represents.

² The historic name applied to the people originally speaking this mother-tongue.

3. *Greek*, represented by the modern Greek, or *Romaic*, which is descended from it. Its earliest records are the poems of Homer, 1000 B.C.

4. *Persian*, containing *Ancient* and *Modern Persian*. Its earliest extant writing is the *Avesta*, or the Bible of Zoroaster, claiming an antiquity of seven thousand years.

5. *Indian*, containing the *Sanskrit*,¹ which is the oldest of all the Indo-European languages, and the modern dialect of India. Among the earliest extant works in this language are the *Vedas*, or the Bible of the Hindoos, written in Sanskrit, probably five thousand years ago.

6. *Slavonic*,² containing the *Russian* (its most important representative), *Polish*, and *Bohemian*.

7. *Teutonic*, or *Germanic*, containing:

(1.) The *Mæso-Gothic*, the language of the Goths (a nation of Teutons), in Mæsia. The oldest German dialect in existence. Extinct as a spoken language, but preserved to us by one Ulflas, a bishop of the Goths, who translated the Scriptures into Gothic for the benefit of his countrymen, about the close of the fourth century. Only parts of this translation remain, of which the most famous is the *Silver Book*, so called from its being transmitted to us in letters of silver and gold.

(2.) The *High German*, at first only spoken in the highlands of Central and Southern Germany. It may be represented by the modern literary German, the language into which Luther translated the Bible.

(3.) The *Low German*, spoken originally along the low-lying shores of the German Ocean and the Baltic Sea. From this region our Saxon fathers came, and hence the Low German includes our present English. It may now be represented by the language of Holland, or *Low Dutch*, to which English bears the strongest likeness, as appears in the following:

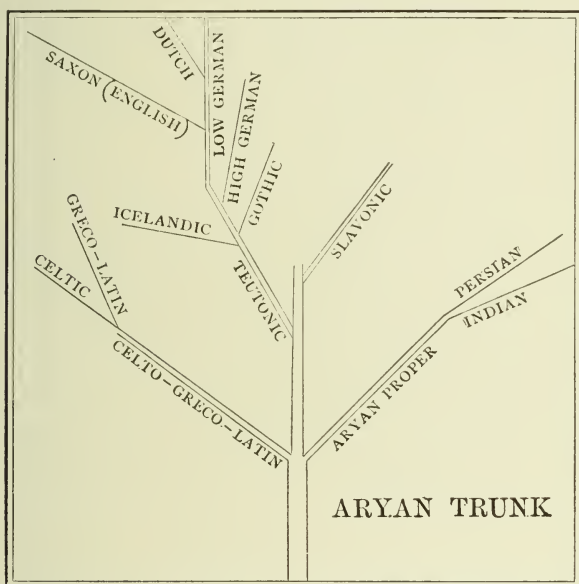
In den beginne was het woord, en het woord was bij God, en het woord was God.—*St. John i, 1.*

(4.) The *Scandinavian*, represented by the Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian; but best by the Icelandic, from which come its earliest literary memorials.

¹ Meaning *classical* or *literary*, in distinction from the language used by the common people.

² The *Slavs* were the third stream of Aryan emigrants into Europe.

The accompanying Linguistic Tree may be assumed to represent the Aryan mother-tongue in process of ramification, while it may furnish a general conception of the Aryan migrations. One main fact will be apparent—‘Westward the course of empire takes its way.’



English.—This is the language used by the people of England, and by all who speak like them elsewhere; for example, in the United States.

Historical Elements.—Its ingredients are derived from sources as varied as the English blood. Of these, as the reader will understand from the historical sketch, the most important are:

1. *Celtic*, the oldest of our philological benefactors.—It does not appear, however, to have at all modified the syntax or affected the articulation of the language, but to have remained a foreign unassimilated accretion. It contributes to the vocabulary a large number of geographical names, as *Thames*, *Kent*; and some miscellaneous words, as *basket*, *button*, *mop*, *pail*, *rail*, *bard*, etc. Between the Anglo-Saxons and the Celts, and hence between

their respective tongues, there was, as we have seen, a reciprocal repulsion.

2. *Latin*.—From this we have borrowed more or less freely for many centuries. To the Roman conquest we are indebted comparatively little. A few civil and military terms were adopted by the Saxon invaders. Of these, some are lost, and others are changed. Thus, *strata*, denoting a paved road, is changed to *street*; *vallum*, a rampart, is retained in *wall*; *castra*, a fortified camp, reappears in *Gloucester*, once written Glevæ castra; *colonia*, a colony, is changed to *coln*, as in *Lincoln* (*Lindi colonia*).

The Christian missionaries of the sixth century made Latin the official language of the Church, and, to some extent, the medium of religious, moral and intellectual instruction; and thus introduced a considerable number of Latin words, chiefly ecclesiastical. Examples are, *episcopus*, bishop; *monachus*, monk; *epistola*, epistle; which were written, *biscep*, *munuc*, *pistel*.

But the great majority of Latinisms have arisen in three epochs,—the thirteenth century, which followed an age devoted to classical studies; the sixteenth, which witnessed a new revival of admiration for antiquity; and the eighteenth, when Johnson, who loved to coin in the Roman mint, was the dictator of prose style.

3. *Danish*.—The Danes have bequeathed us few words and relatively unimportant; such as *fellow*, *fro*, *gait*, *ill*, *etc.*, including some local names extending over the grounds of their settlements.

4. *Norman-French*.—This was spoken in Northern France—Normandy; and, as the student should now be aware, was composed of three elements,—the Celtic,¹ the Latin, the Teutonic.² It was the dominant speech in England between two and three hundred years, the vernacular finding its refuge in the cottages of the rustic and illiterate. By the gradual coalescence of the two races, its influence was very great, both by introducing many new words and by changing the spelling and sound of old ones.

5. *Greek*.—To this source we are indebted for scientific terms, slightly for terms in common use; as, *botany*, *physics*, *ethics*, *music*, *didactic*, *melancholy* (literally, *black-bile*).

¹ The Celts settled in this region were known, it will be remembered, as Gauls.

² The Franks and Danes.

6. *Anglo-Saxon*.—This is not so much an element, evidently, as it is the mother tongue, or the stock,—the stream to which the rest have been tributary. It is estimated that the percentage of Anglo-Saxon in modern English, exclusive of scientific and provincial terms, is about five-eighths; in the vocabulary of conversation, four-fifths. The following table may be of interest, as showing approximately, the relative proportion of Anglo-Saxon in the departments of general literature:

Bible, - - - - -	93	Prayer-Book, - - - - -	87
Poetry, - - - - -	88	Fiction, - - - - -	87
Essay, - - - - -	78	Oratory, - - - - -	76
History, - - - - -	72	Newspaper, - - - - -	72
Rhetoric, - - - - -	69		

Original English (449—1066).—This, as we have learned, was *Anglo-Saxon*. From what has been said, it is evident that this form of English, or Old English, as it is sometimes called, resulted from the blending together of the several kindred dialects spoken by the Germanic tribes who invaded Britain between the middle of the fifth and the middle of the sixth centuries. We have used the word ‘kindred’ to indicate that while there was a difference of dialect among the invaders, they all used substantially the same language.

From the specimens already given, the reader need not be told that the language first brought from Northern Germany to England was so different from ours that we should not understand it if we heard it spoken; nor can we learn to read it without very nearly as much study as is required to learn French or German. Its alphabet consisted of twenty-four characters, only two of which, as Anglo-Saxon books are now printed, are familiar to the eye. These represent the two sounds of *th* as heard in *thine* and *thin*. As compared with our present English, the Anglo-Saxon is called an *inflectional* tongue; that is, it indicated the relations of words by a correspondence of *forms*, the form being varied according to the number, person, case, mood, tense, gender, degree of comparison, and other conditions; whereas, such relations are now indicated by position, auxiliaries and particles, the words themselves remaining for the most part unvaried.

Thus the Latin ‘*bib-ere*’ was translated by ‘*drinc-an*,’ but now by *to drink*. We now say ‘I love’ and ‘We love,’ without any

change in the form of the word *love*; but the Anglo-Saxons used, for the first, *lufige*, and for the second *lufiath*. To say 'I shall help,' and 'We shall help,' the same form of the verb serves us equally well; but they thought different forms were necessary,—*secal helpan*, and *seulon helpan*: whence we see that our present auxiliary verbs, used as mere indications of time, were once inflected and used as principal verbs,—for example, I **shall** to *help* and we **shall** to *help*. In the sentences, '*They were good hunters*,' and '*They had the appearance of good hunters*,' the one form 'good hunters' expresses equally well both relations; but the Anglo-Saxons would have expressed it, 'hunt-an gód-e,' and 'hunt-ena gód-ra,' varying the form both of the adjective and the noun. This variation of *form*, therefore, to suit the offices which a word may have to perform in the sentence, is what we are to understand by *inflection*. The accident and arrangement of English then, as distinguished from its analytic character now, are well illustrated in the following passage from King Alfred, in whose time the language, as a synthetic tongue, reached its best estate:

'Fela spella him sædon tha
Beormas ælther ge of hym
agenum lande, ge of thaem lande the
ymb hy utan wæron: ac he
nyste hwæt thaes sothes wær,
for thaem he lit sylf ne ge seah.'

Many tidings (to) him said the
Beormas either (*i.e.* both) of their
own lande, and of them lands that
around them about were: but he
wist-not what (of) the sooth (truth) was,
for that he itself not 'y-saw.

Transition English.—After a while men began to think that so many terminations were useless, that they were too cumbersome, involving a waste of time and energy in writing and speaking; for man is either a very lazy or a very practical animal, and dislikes to say *do not*, *can not*, and *shall not*, when he can more easily and quickly say *don't*, *can't*, and *shan't*. *I have been loved* is not quite so laborious as 'Ic wæs fulfremedlice gelufod.' So, as a matter of economy, to save breath and secure a freer utterance, sentential structure became less periodic, most of the inflections were dropped; while short auxiliaries, or help-words, were used instead. This result, though natural, was very much accelerated by the Norman Conquest; for by that event the language was driven from literature and polite society, being there displaced by French and Latin. No longer fixed in books, and living only on the lips of the ignorant, it was broken up into

numerous diverging dialects, of which the chief were the Northern, Midland, and Southern; nor did it again receive literary culture till the beginning of the thirteenth century, from which date it steadily advanced, till, in the form of the East Midland dialect, it acquired complete and final ascendancy in the hands of Chaucer and Wycliffe—the first the forerunner of English Literature, the second, of the Reformation.

This, then, was a period of confusion, alike perplexing to those who used the language and to those who wish to trace its vicissitudes,—a period in which the old was passing, through a state of ruin, into the new. The two languages, native and stranger, hitherto repellent, began slowly to melt into a harmonious whole; and the former, with a distinct and recognizable existence, though gorged with unorganized material, was fitting for a vigorous and prolific growth.

The process of disorganization and decay may be exhibited to the eye by the following extract from the Saxon Chronicle, the second column showing what the text would be if written in purer Saxon:

'Hi swencten the wrecce men of
the land mid castel-weorces.
Tha the castles waren maked
tha fylden hi mid yvele men. Tha
namen hi tha men the hi wenden
thæt anð God hefden bathe be
nighðes and' be dæies.'

Hi swencon tha wreccan menn of
tham lande mid castel-weorcum.
Tha tha castel wæron gemacod
tha fyldon hi mid yfelon manum. Tha
namon hi tha menn tha hi wendon
thæt ænig God hæfdon batwa be
nihte & be dæge.

It may be of interest to watch, in early versions of the *Lord's Prayer*, that series of mutations by which Anglo-Saxon was passing gradually into modern English:

A.D. 700.

Thu ure Fader, the eart on heofenum,
Si thin noman gehalgod,
Cume thin rike,
Si thin Willa on eorðan twa on heofenum;
Syle us todag orne dægwanlican hlaf,
And forgif us ure gylter,
Swa we fogifath tham the with us agylthath;
And ne laed thu na us on kostnunge;
Ac alys us fromn yfele.
Si bit swa.

A.D. 890.

Fæder ure thu the eart on heofenum,
Si thin nama gehalgod;
To becume thin rice.
Gewurthe thin willa on eorðan swa swa on heofenum,
Urne dæghwamlican hlaf syle us to dæg;
And forgyf us ure gyltas, swa swa we forgyfoth nrum gyltendum;

And ne gelaedde thu us on costnunge,
Ac alys us of yfele. Sothlice.

A.D. 1120.

Ure Fader in Heven rich,
Thy name be halyed ever lich.
Thou bring us thy michel bliese,
Als bit in heven y doe;
Evear in yearth been it alsoe.
That holy brede that lasteth ay,
Thou send us this ilke day.
Forgive us all that we have done
As we forgive ech other one.
Ne let us fall into no founding,
Ne sheld us frym the foule thing.

A.D. 1250.

Fadir ur that es in hevене,
Halud be thy nam to nevene:
Thon do us thy rich rike:
Thi will on erd be wrought elk,
Als it es wrought in heven ay:
Ur ilk day brede give us to day:
Forgive thou all us dettes urs
Als we forgive all ur detturs:
And ledde us na iu na fanding,
But sculd us fra ivel thing.

A.D. 1250.

(*East Midland.*)

Ure fadir that hart in hevене,
Halged be thi name with giftis sevene;
Samn cume thi kingdom,
Thi wille in herthe als in hevене be don;
Ure bred that lastes ai
Gyve it hus this hilke dai,
And ure misdedis thu forgyve hus,
Als we forgyve tham that misdou hus,
And leod us intol na fandinge,
Bot frels us fra alle ivele thinge. Amen.

Native Features of English.—1. Its grammar is almost exclusively Anglo-Saxon. 2. Anglo-Saxon is eminently the organ of practical action—the language of business, of the street, market, and farm. 3. The specific terms of the English tongue are Anglo-Saxon, while the generic terms are foreign—Latin, Greek, or French. Thus, we are Romans when we speak, in a general way, of *moving*; but Teutons when we *run, walk, leap, stagger, slip, ride, slide, glide*. 4. The Saxon gives us names for the greater part of natural objects; as, *sun, moon, stars, rain, snow, hill, dale*. 5. Those words expressive of strongest feelings are Saxon; as, *home, hearth, fireside, life, death, man and wife, father and mother, brother and sister, love and hate, hope and fear, gladness and sorrow*. 6. A large proportion of the language of *invective, humor, satire, and colloquial pleasantry*, is Saxon. 7. In short, to the Saxon belongs the vocabu-

lary of common life, including our colloquialisms, idiomatic phrases, and the language of conversation. Thus we see that the essential element in English is native. Between its past and present there is only the difference that exists between the sapling and the tree, or between the boy and the man.

Anglo-Norman History in English.—Supposing all other records to have perished, we could still trace the reciprocal relations of the Saxon and Norman occupants of England in their contributions to the language which they have jointly bequeathed us. Thus we should conclude that the Norman was the ruling race from the noticeable fact that nearly all the words of state descend to us from them,—*sovereign, throne, crown, sceptre, realm, royalty, prince, chancellor, treasurer*. Norman aristocracy transmits us *duke, baron, peer, esquire, count, palace, castle, hall, mansion*. Common articles of dress are Saxon,—*shirt, shoes, hat, breeches, cloak*; but other articles, subject to changes of fashion, are of Norman origin,—*gown, coat, boots, mantle, cap, bonnet*, etc. *Room* and *kitchen* are Saxon; *chambers, parlors, galleries, pantries, and laundries* are Norman. The Saxon's *stool, bench, bed, and board*—often probably it was no more—are less luxurious than the *table, chair, and couch* of his Norman lord. The *boor* whose sturdy arms turned the soil, opened wide his eyes at the Norman *carpet* and *curtain*. While luxury, chivalry, adornment, are Norman, the instruments used in cultivating the earth, as well as its main products, are Saxon,—*plough, share, rake, scythe, harrow, sickle, spade, wheat, rye, oats, grass, hay, flax*.

Thus are words, when we remove the veil which custom and familiarity have thrown over them, seen to be illustrative of national life. As the earth has its strata and deposits from which the geologist is able to arrive at a knowledge of the successive physical changes through which a region has passed, so language has its alluvium and drift from which the linguist may disinter, in fossil form, the social condition, the imaginations and feelings, of a period—a period far more remote than any here suggested.

Superiority of Saxon English.—The special reasons assignable for this are:

1. *Early association*.—A child's vocabulary is almost wholly Saxon. He calls a thing *nice* or *nasty*, not *pleasant* or *disagreeable*. Words acquired later in life are less familiar—less organically connected with his ideas, and hence less rapidly suggestive.

2. *Brevity*.—The fewer the words, the more effective the idea,—as, to point to the door is more expressive than to say, 'Leave the room.' On the same principle, the fewer the syllables, the stronger the impression produced,—less time and effort are required to read the sign and perceive the thing signified. Hence the shortness of Saxon words becomes a cause of their greater force. One qualification must be made. When great power or intensity is to be suggested, an expansive and sonorous word, allowing the consciousness a longer time to dwell on the quality predicated, may be an advantage. A devout and poetic soul gazing, in stilly night, into stellar spaces,—what verb will express its emotion? *See, look, think?*—only the Latin *contemplate*. The noise going to and returning from hill to hill,—what word will describe it? *Sound, boom, roar, echo*, are all too tame; only *reverberate* tells the whole. Hence the value of the Latin element in contributing to copiousness and strength of expression. It is a pleasing study to observe how, in all the best writers, the long and short are harmoniously combined, as in these lines from *Macbeth*:

'Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No! this, my hand, will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.'

3. *Definiteness*.—'Well-being arises from well-doing,' is Saxon. 'Felicity attends virtue,' is Latin. How inferior is the second, because less definite than the first. The more concrete the terms, the brighter the picture, as *wagon* and *cart* are more vivid than *vehicle*.

Therefore, though many words of Latin origin are equally simple and clear, those of Saxon origin are, as a whole, more so, and should be preferred. This is the current maxim of composition, most happily enforced in the following lines:

'Think not that strength lies in the big, round word,
Or that the brief and plain must needs be weak.
To whom can this be true who once has heard
The cry for help, the tongue that all men speak,
When want, or fear, or woe, is in the throat,

So that each word gasped out is like a shriek
Pressed from the sore heart, or a strange, wild note,
Sung by some fay or fiend? There is a strength,
Which dies if stretched too far, or spun too fine,
Which has more height than breadth, more depth than length.
Let but this force of thought and speech be mine,
And he that will, may take the sleek, fat phrase,
Which glows, but burns not, though it beam and shine,
Light, but no heat,—a flash, but not a blaze.¹

Results.—So does the English language combine, to an extent unequalled by any other living tongue, the classic (Latin) and the Teutonic,—the euphony, sonorousness, and harmony of the first; the strength, tenderness, and simplicity of the second; a happy medium between French and German,—more grave than the former, less harsh and cumbersome than the latter, grammatically simpler than either. From its composite character come that wealth and compass, that rich and varied music, which have made English Literature the crown and glory of the works of man. It has an abode, far and wide, in the islands of the earth; gives greeting on the shores of the Pacific, as of the Atlantic. Fixed in multitudes of standard works and endeared to the increasing millions who read and speak it, the natural growth of population, the love of conquest and colonization which has distinguished the Saxon race since they traversed the German Ocean in their frail barks, will help to extend and perpetuate its empire.

¹ Dr. J. A. Alexander.

CHAPTER III.

FORMING OF THE LITERATURE.

Wherever possible, let us not be told about this man or that. Let us hear the man himself speak, let us see him act, and let us be left to form our own opinions about him.—*Froude*.

My friend, the times which are gone are a book with seven seals; and what you call the spirit of past ages is but the spirit of this or that worthy gentleman in whose mind those ages are reflected.—*Goethe*.

The view of human manners, in all their variety of appearances, is both profitable and agreeable; and if the aspect in some periods seem horrid and deformed, we may thence learn to cherish with the greater anxiety that science and civility, which has so close a connection with virtue and humanity, and which as it is a sovereign antidote against superstition, is also the most effectual remedy against vice and disorder of every kind.—*Hume*.

Politics.—From the primitive stock—Angles and Saxons, reinforced by the Danish ravagers, buried, re-elevated, and modified, by the Conquest—were to spring the nation and its history. In pursuance of Germanic custom, there was an early division of the kingdom, as we have seen, into counties, and of these into hundreds, the latter partition supposed to contain a hundred free families. Each had its tribunal; the *Court of the Hundred*—held by an alderman, next in authority to the king—being the lower. In course of time, the *County Court* became the real arbiter of important suits, the first contenting itself with punishing petty offences and keeping up a local police. Chiefly to this the English freeman looked for the maintenance of his civil rights. The hundreds were further distributed into *decennaries*, or tithings, known as ‘ten men’s tale.’ In one of these, every freeman above the age of twelve was required to be enrolled. The members were a perpetual bail for each other; so that if one of the ten committed any fault, the nine were indirectly responsible. From earliest English times there had prevailed the usage of *compurgation*, under which the accused could be acquitted by the oath of his friends, who pledged their knowledge, or at least their belief, of his innocence. The following passage in the laws of Alfred refers to this practice:

‘If any one accuse a king’s thane of homicide, if he dare to purge himself, let him do it along with twelve king’s thanes.’ ‘If any one accuse a thane of less rank than a king’s thane, let him purge himself along with eleven of his equals, and one king’s thane.’

Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence proceeded, as here, upon the maxim that the best guarantee of every man’s obedience to the government was to be sought in the confidence of his neighbors. This privilege, the manifest fountain of unblushing perjury, was abolished by Henry II; though it long afterwards was preserved, by exemption, in London and in boroughs. There was left, however, the favorite mode of defence,—the *ordeal*, or ‘judgment of God.’ Innocence could be proved by the power of holding hot iron in the hand, or by sinking when flung into the water, for swimming was a proof of guilt. When these were annulled in 1216, the combat remained, but no longer applicable unless an injured prosecutor came forward to demand it. This was of Norman origin. The nobleman fought on horseback; the plebeian on foot, with his club and target. The vanquished party forfeited his claim and paid a fine. It was the function of the court to see that the formalities of the combat, the ordeal, or the compurgation, were duly regarded, and to observe whether the party succeeded or succumbed,—a function which required neither a knowledge of positive law nor the dictates of natural sagacity.

The seed of our present form of *Trial by Jury* may be discovered in a law of Ethelred II, binding the sheriff and twelve principal thanes to swear that they would neither acquit any criminal nor convict any innocent person. In 1176, precise enactment established the jury system, still rude and imperfect, as the usual mode of trial:

‘The justices, who represented the king’s person, were to make inquiry by the oaths of twelve knights, or other lawful men, of each hundred, together with the four men from each township, of all murders, robberies, and thefts, and of all who had harboured such offenders, since the king’s (Henry II) accession to the throne.’

The jurors were essentially witnesses distinguished from other witnesses only by customs which imposed upon them the obligation of an oath and regulated their number. For fifty years yet their duties were to present offenders for trial by ordeal or combat. Under Edward I, witnesses acquainted with the particular fact in question were added to the general jury; and later these became simply ‘witnesses,’ without judicial power,

while the first ceased to be witnesses and became only judges of the testimony given. It was the abolition of the ordeal system in 1216 which led the way to the establishment of what is called a 'petty jury' for the final trial of the prisoner. Centuries were to pass, however, before the complete separation of the functions of juryman and witness should be effected.

The 'Meeting of Wise Men' no longer retained, under Alfred, its character of a national gathering, as when the Saxons preserved in simplicity their Germanic institutions. Then all free-men, whether owners of land or not, composed part of it. Gradually, by the non-attendance or indifference of the people, only the great proprietors were left; and, without the formal exclusion of any class of its members, it shrunk up into an aristocratic assembly.

After the Conquest, in the reign of John, the national council was a gathering, at the king's bidding, of all who held their lands directly from the crown, both clerical and lay. It was like the 'Meeting of the Wise Men,' only more people sat in it, and they were the king's feudal vassals. Those who were entitled to be present, could only be present themselves—could not send representatives. At the county courts, groups of men sent from the various parts of the shire represented, in the transaction of business, the whole free folk of the shire. Slowly and tentatively this principle was applied to the constitution of the Great Council. Henry III and his barons alike ordered the choice of 'discreet knights' from every county, 'to meet on the common business of the realm.' In 1246, the word *parliament* was first used as the name of the council. The extension of electoral rights to the freeholders at large is seen in the king's writ of 1264, sent to the higher clergy, earls, and barons; to the sheriffs, cities, and boroughs throughout England, commanding the former three to come in person, the latter to send representatives. It was long, however, before the chosen deputies were admitted to a share in deliberative power. In 1295, Edward gathered at Westminster an assembly that was in every sense a national Parliament. It straightway fulfilled the sole duty of a Parliament in those days,—voted the king a supply. Two years later the one thing still wanting was gained,—a solemn acknowledgment by the king that it alone had power to tax the nation. The idea of

representation has risen. 'It is a most just law,' says Edward, 'that what concerns all should be approved of by all, and that common dangers should be met by measures provided in common.' In Edward's reign, the barons began to hold their deliberations privately. The knights from the shires and the deputies from the towns formed a second chamber. From this time, therefore, dates the origin of the House of Lords and the House of Commons.

The rights of self-government, of free speech in free meeting, of equal justice by one's peers, were brought safely across the ages of Norman tyranny by the traders and shopkeepers, who alone, unnoticed and despised by prelate and noble, had preserved the full tradition of Teutonic liberty. Henry I, promising to govern the English according to their own wishes, with wisdom and moderation, granted them a first charter, which, though of short duration, was the first limitation imposed on the despotism of the Conquest. A hundred years later, the barons extorted from King John the glorious and powerful *Magna Charta*,—ever after the basis of the English freedom, the corner-stone of the noble edifice of the Constitution. Life, liberty, and property were protected. No man could henceforth be detained in prison without trial. No man would have to buy justice. These words, honestly interpreted, convey an ample security for the two main rights of civil society:

'No freeman shall be seized or imprisoned, or dispossessed, or outlawed, or in any way brought to ruin: we will not go against any man nor send against him, save by legal judgment of his peers or by the law of the land. To no man will we sell, to no man will we deny or delay, justice or right.'

At the end of the thirteenth century, the charters were so firmly established that no monarch would venture to disturb them.

Small and obscure are the beginnings of great political institutions, and unforeseen are the tremendous results of the actor's deeds, who, as he casts the seed into the soil, little dreams of the mighty and perpetual germination it will disclose in after days.

Society.—By Alfred's day, it was assumed that no man could exist without dependence upon a superior. The ravages and long insecurity of the Danish wars drove the freeholder to seek protection from the thane. His freehold was surrendered to be received back as a fief, laden with service to its lord. Gradually

the 'lordless' man became a sort of outlaw; the free churl, who had held his land straight from the Maker of it, sank into the villain,¹ and with his personal freedom went his share in the government. The bulk of the workmen are serfs. In a dialogue of the tenth century, written for popular instruction, the ploughman says: 'I labor much. I go out at daybreak, urging the oxen to the field, and I yoke them to the plough. I am bound to plough every day a full acre or more.' The herdsman says: 'When the ploughman separates the oxen, I lead them to the meadows, and all night I stand watching over them on account of thieves; and again in the morning I take them to the plough, well-fed and watered.' And the shepherd: 'In the first part of the morning I drive my sheep to their pasture, and stand over them in heat and cold with my dogs, lest the wolves destroy them. I lead them back to their folds, and milk them twice a day; and I move their folds, and make cheese and butter, and am faithful to my lord.'

The military oppression of the Normans levelled all degrees of tenants and servants into a modified slavery. The English lord was pushed from his place by the Norman baron, and sank into the position from which he had thrust the churl. The peasant—the producer—had no alternative but to abide from the cradle to the grave in one spot, and was held to be only fulfilling his natural destiny when he toiled without hope for the privileged consumer. 'Why should villains eat beef or any dainty food?' asks one of the Norman minstrels.

The social organization of every rural part of England rested on the manorial system,—a division of the land, for purposes of cultivation and internal order, into a number of large estates. The lord of the manor, instead of cultivating the estate through his own bailiff, at length found it more convenient and profitable to distribute it among tenants at a given rent, payable either in money or in produce. This habit of leasing afforded an opportunity by which the aspiring among the tenantry could rise to a position of apparent equality with their older masters. The growing use of the words 'farm' and 'farmer' from the twelfth century mark the initial steps of a peasant revolution. The

¹ A peasant, one of the lowest class of feudal tenants; a bondman, and later a vile, wicked person. One of the many words which men have dragged downwards with themselves, and made more or less partakers of their own fall.

tenants were subject to many exactions. The lord's bull and boar were free, under the conditions of tenure, to range at night through their standing corn and grass; and their sheep,—for they were permitted to acquire and hold property upon sufferance,—were always to be folded on their master's land. That the land was indifferently farmed we may well believe, when we learn that the highest rent was seven pence an acre, and the lowest a farthing. The rise of the farmer class was soon followed by that of the free laborer. Influences, indeed, had long been quietly freeing the peasantry from their local bondage. Prior to the Conquest, pure slavery was gradually disappearing before the efforts of the Church. Subsequently she urged emancipation, as a mark of piety, on all estates but her own. The fugitive bondsman found freedom in chartered towns, where a residence of one year and a day conferred franchise. The pomp of chivalry and the cost of incessant campaigns drained the royal and baronial purse; and the sale of freedom to the serf, or of exemption from services to the villain, afforded an easy and tempting mode of replenishment. Thus, by a solemn deed in 1302, for forty marks, 'Robert Crul and Matilda his wife, with all his offspring begotten and to be begotten, together with all his goods holden and to be holden,' was rendered 'forever free and quit from all yoke of servitude.'

In the silent growth and elevation of the people, the boroughs led the way. The English town was originally a piece of the general country, where people, either for purposes of trade or protection, happened to cluster more closely than elsewhere. It was organized and governed in the same way as the manors around it,—justice was administered, its customary services exacted, its annual rent collected, by the officer of the king, noble, or ecclesiastic, to whose estate it belonged. Its inhabitants were bound to reap their lord's corn crops, to grind at his mill, to redeem their strayed cattle from his pound. Its dues paid and services rendered, however, property and person alike were secured against arbitrary seizure. The townsman's rights were rigidly defined by custom, and by custom were constantly widening. By disuse or forgetfulness, services would disappear, while privileges and immunities were being for the most part purchased by hard bargaining. At Leicester, for instance, one of the chief

aims of its burgesses was to regain their old English practice of compurgation, for which had been substituted the foreign trial by duel. Says a charter of the time:

'It chanced that two kinsmen . . . waged a duel about a certain piece of land, concerning which a dispute had arisen between them; and they fought from the first to the ninth hour, each conquering by turns. Then one of them fleeing from the other till he came to a certain little pit, as he stood on the brink of the pit, and was about to fall therein, his kinsman said to him, "Take care of the pit, turn back lest thou shouldest fall into it." Thereat so much clamor and noise was made by the by-standers and those who were sitting around, that the Earl heard these clamors as far off as the castle, and he inquired of some how it was there was such a clamor, and answer was made to him that two kinsmen were fighting about a certain piece of ground, and that one had fled till he reached a certain little pit, and that, as he stood over the pit and was about to fall into it, the other warned him. Then the townsmen, being moved with pity, made a covenant with the Earl that they should give him three pence yearly for each house in the High Street that had a gable, on condition that he should grant to them that the twenty-four jurors who were in Leicester from ancient times should from that time forward discuss and decide all pleas they might have among themselves.'

At the close of the thirteenth century, all the more important towns had secured freedom of trade, of justice, and of government. Their liberties and charters served as models and incentives to the smaller communities struggling into existence. While the tendency at first seems to have been agricultural, at the Conquest it had become mercantile, and the controlling class was the merchant guild. Wealth and industry developed into dangerous rivalry a second class, composed of escaped serfs, of traders without lands, of the artisans and the poor. Without share in the right and regulation of trade, their struggles for power and privilege began in the reign of the first Henry, and their turbulent election of a London mayor in 1261 marks their final victory.

In the tenth century, a man wished for two things,—not to be slain, and to have a good leather coat. The state of warfare still contends against the state of order. The right of aggrieved persons to interfere with the sober course of the law is acknowledged even by Alfred:

'We also command that the man who knows his foe to be home-sitting, fight not before he demand justice of him. If he have such power that he can beset his foe and besiege him within, let him keep him within for seven days, and attack him not if he will remain within.'

There are so many pagan Danes and other disreputable persons scattered up and down the land, that society must protect itself in a summary fashion:

'If a stranger or foreigner shall wander from the highway, and then neither call out nor sound a horn, he is to be taken for a thief and killed, or redeemed by fine.'

When Henry II, succeeding the Norman king, ascended the throne in 1154, he found his kingdom a prey to horrible anarchy. The royal domains were surrounded on all sides by menacing fortresses garrisoned by resolute soldiers who recognized no authority but that of their chiefs. Within three years, eleven hundred of these castles, the haunts of robbers, were razed to the ground, while the peasants and townspeople applauded the work of destruction. He may be truly said to have initiated 'the rule of law.' Ten years after his accession the principle of pecuniary compensation for crime had, for the most part, been superseded by criminal laws, administered with stern severity. Yet outrage continues to be the constant theme of legislation. In the reign of the first Edward, every man was bound to hold himself in readiness, duly armed, for the king's service or the hue and cry which pursued the felon. An act for the suppression of crimes directs that,—

'For the greater security of the people, walled towns shall keep their gates shut from sun-set to sun-rise; and none shall lodge all night in their suburbs, unless his host shall answer for him. All towns shall be kept as in times past, with a watch all night at each gate, with a number of men.'

Another, after reciting the commission of robberies, murders, and riots, in the city of London, enjoins:

'That none be found in the streets, either with spear or buckler, after the curfew-bell rings out, except they be great lords, or other persons of note; also, that no tavern, either for wine or ale, be kept open after that hour on forfeiture of forty pence.'

Once, during this reign, a band of lesser nobles disguise their way into a great merchant fair; fire every booth, rob and slaughter the merchants, and carry the booty off to ships lying in wait. Molten streams of silver and gold, says the tale of horror, flowed down the gutters to the sea. Lawless companies of club-men maintain themselves by general violence, aid the country nobles in their feuds, wrest money and goods from the tradesmen. Under a show of courtesy the bloodthirsty instinct breaks out. Richard of the Lion-heart has a lion's appetite. Under the walls of Acre he wants some pork. There being none to be had, a young Saracen is killed, cooked, salted, and served him. He eats it with a relish, and desires to see the head of the pig. The cook produces it trembling, the king laughs, and says the army, having provisions so convenient, has nothing to fear from famine. The town taken, he has thirty of the most noble prisoners beheaded,

bids his cook boil the heads and serve one to each of the ambassadors who came to sue for their pardon. Thereupon the sixty thousand prisoners are led into the plain for execution.

Theodore, who founded the English Church, denied Christian burial to the kidnapper, and prohibited the sale of children by their parents after the age of seven. The murder of a slave, though no crime in the eye of the State, became a sin for which penance was due to the Church. Manumission became frequent in wills, as a boon to the souls of the dead. Usually the slave was set free before the altar; sometimes at the spot where four roads met, and there bidden go whither he would. In the more solemn form, his master took him by the hand in full shire meeting, showed him the open road and door, and gave him the lance and sword of the freeman. A hundred years after the prohibition, in the ninth century, of the slave-traffic from English ports, men and women are said to have been bought in all parts of England and carried to Ireland for sale. 'You might,' says a chronicler, 'have seen with sorrow long files of young people of both sexes and of the greatest beauty bound with ropes and daily exposed for sale. . . . They sold in this manner as slaves their own children.' Not till the reign of Henry II was it finally suppressed in its last stronghold, the port of Bristol.

A law of 1285, relating to highways, directs:

'That those ways shall be enlarged where bushes, woods, or dykes be, where men may lurk, so that there be neither dyke, tree, nor bush within two hundred feet on each side of those roads, great trees excepted.'

A provision which illustrates at once the social and physical condition of the country at the time. The roads are narrow—from four to eight feet—and of difficult passage. A bishop, journeying to London, is obliged to rest his beasts of burden on alternate days of travel. Returning, he accomplishes the first day only five miles. Travellers ride on horseback, and convey their culinary wares or merchandise in pack-saddles. The dead, the invalid, ladies of rank, are carried in a *horse-litter*, borne by horses and mules, sometimes by men. *Carts* are the carriages of the nobility, distinguished from the common description by ornament. Even that of King John is springless,—the body rests upon the axletree, the wheels are cut from solid pieces of circular wood, covered ornamentally, and bound round with a thick wooden

ture. For obvious reasons, a solitary journey in these early days will be a matter of grave anxiety. Friends setting out from the same place, or strangers becoming acquainted upon the road, join in parties for mutual protection and cheer through the semi-desert.

The houses of the people in the thirteenth century were generally of one story, consisting of a hall and a bed-chamber. The first was kitchen, dining-room, reception-room, as well as sleeping apartment for strangers and visitors indiscriminately; the second was the resort of the female portion of the household. The door opened outward, and was left open,—a sign of hospitality, which even in turbulent times was almost boundless between those who had established friendly relations. The roof, covered with oval tiles, exhibited two ornamental points. Dwellings of the opulent sometimes had upper floors, reached by *an external staircase*. The upper part was considered the place of greatest security, as it could be entered only by one door, which was approached by a flight of steps, and hence was more readily defended. The hall was generally the whole height of the house. Adjacent to it was the stable, in which the servants, if any, were well content to lodge. Palaces and manor-houses had essentially the same arrangement,—a private room for the lord, and the great hall which was the usual living apartment for the whole family, and in which retainers and guests, often to the number of three or four hundred, were kennelled, the floor being strewn with dry rushes in winter, and with hay or straw in summer.

Already the Jew was a capitalist,—the only one in Europe. He had followed William from Normandy. Without citizenship, absolutely at the king's mercy, he was the engine of finance; and, as such, compelled the kingly regard. Castle and cathedral alike owed their existence to his loans. His wealth—wrung from him by torture when mild entreaty failed—filled the royal exchequer at the outbreak of war or revolt. The 'Jews' Houses' were almost the first of stone, which superseded the mere hovels of the English burghers. John, having wrested from them a sum equal to a year's revenue, might suffer none to plunder them save himself. Hated by the people, persecuted at last by the law, forbidden to appear in the street without the colored tablet which distinguished the race, their long agony

ended in their expulsion from the realm by Edward. Of the sixteen thousand who preferred exile to apostasy, many were wrecked, others robbed and flung overboard. From that time till their restoration by Cromwell, no Jew touched English soil.

Under the worst of rulers it is 'Merry England.' Of indoor amusements, the most attractive to high and low is gambling. So universal was the passion in the twelfth century, that in the Crusades the kings of France and England made the most stringent regulations to restrict it. No man in the army was to play for money, except the knights and the clergy; nor were the latter to lose more than twenty shillings in one day. The lower orders who should be found playing without the permission and supervision of their masters, were to be whipped; and, if mariners, were to be plunged into the sea on three successive mornings. Love of hardy sports, so characteristic of the English, is not of modern growth. It was one of the most important parts of popular education seven centuries ago. Wrestling was the national pastime. The sturdy yeoman wrestled for prizes,—a ram or a bull, a ring or a pipe of wine. Foot-ball was the favorite game. In the Easter holidays they had river tournaments. In the summer, the youths exercised themselves in leaping, archery, stone-throwing, slinging javelins, and fighting with bucklers. The sword-dance of the Saxons, descending to their successors, held an honored place among popular sports. The acrobat went about to market and fair, circling knives and balls adroitly through his hands, and the 'musical girls' danced before knight and peasant as the daughter of Herodias before Herod. A very ancient and popular game was that of throwing a peculiar stick at cocks. It was practised especially by school-boys. Three origins of it have been given: first, that in the Danish wars, the Saxons failed to surprise a certain city in consequence of the crowing of cocks, and had therefore a great hatred of that bird; second, that the cocks were special representatives of Frenchmen, with whom the English were constantly at war; third, that they were connected with Peter's denial of Christ. Two diversions of the Middle Ages, however, were a pride and ornament, the theme of song, the object of law, and the business of life,—hunting and hawking. A knight seldom

stirred from his house without a falcon¹ on his wrist or a greyhound at his feet. Into these pastimes the clergy rushed with an irrepressible eagerness. To the country revel came the taborer, the bagpiper, and the minstrel—a privileged wanderer. Music, with its immemorial talismanic power to charm, seems always to have ranked as a favorite accomplishment. The complaint of a Scotch abbot in 1160 suggests rather amusingly the innovations it was making in the devotional customs of the Church:

‘Since all types and figures are now ceased, why so many organs and cymbals in our churches? Why, I say, that terrible blowing of bellows which rather imitates noise of thunder than the sweet harmony of voice?’

Again:

‘One restrains his breath, another breaks his breath, and a third unaccountably dilates his voice. Sometimes (I blush to say it) they fall and quiver like the neighing of horses; at other times they look like persons in the agonies of death; their eyes roll; their shoulders are moved upwards and downwards; and their fingers dance to every note.’

Intellectually, the real character of these times is to be judged by their multitude of superstitions. On the Continent, in particular, credulity was habitual and universal. The west of Britain was believed to be inhabited by the souls of the dead. In a lake in Munster, Ireland, there were two islands. Into the first, death could never enter; but age, disease, and weariness wrought upon the inhabitants till they grew tired of their immortality, and learned to look upon the second as a haven of repose; they launched their barks upon its dark waters, touched its shore, and were at rest. The three companions of St. Colman were a cock, which announced the hour of devotion; a mouse, which bit the ear of the drowsy saint till he rose; and a fly, which, if in the course of his studies his thoughts wandered, or he was called away, alighted on the line where he had left off, and kept the place. In the Church of St. Sabina at Rome was long shown a ponderous stone which the devil had flung at St. Dominic, vainly hoping to crush a head that was shielded by the guardian angel. The Gospel of St. John suspended around the neck, a rosary, a relic of Christ or of a saint,—any of the thousand talismans distributed among the faithful, would baffle the utmost efforts of diabolical malice. The more terrible phenomena of nature, unmoved by exorcisms and sprinklings, were invariably

¹ A bird of great destructive power, trained to the pursuit of other birds.

attributed to the intervention of spirits. Such phenomena were by the clergy frequently identified with acts of rebellion against themselves. In the tenth century, the opinion everywhere prevailed that the end of the world was approaching. Many charters begin with these words: 'As the world is now drawing to its close.' An army was so terrified by a solar eclipse, which it conceived to announce this consummation, as to disperse hastily on all sides. More than once the apparition of a comet filled Europe with terror. In the shadows of the universal ignorance, nothing was too absurd for belief and practice. In France, animals were accused of high crimes and misdemeanors, tried, and acquitted or convicted, with all the solemnity of law. The wild were referred to ecclesiastical tribunals; the domestic to the civil. In 1120, a French bishop pronounced an injunction against the caterpillars and field-mice for the ravages they made on the crops. If after three days' notice the condemned did not 'wither off the face of the earth,' they were solemnly anathematized. If, instead, they became perversely more numerous and destructive, the lawyers ascribed it, not to any injustice of the sentence nor to the inefficiency of the court, but to the machinations of Satan. From the thirteenth century to the sixteenth, there are not a few records of proceedings in criminal courts against hogs for devouring children.

About the twelfth century, the brood of superstitions, which had once consisted for the most part in wild legends of fairies, mermaids, giants, dragons, conflicts in which the Devil took a prominent part but was always defeated, or illustrations of the boundless efficacy of some charm or relic,—began to assume a darker hue, and the ages of religious terrorism commenced. Never was the sense of Satanic power and presence more profound and universal. In Christian art, the aspect of Christ became less engaging; that of Satan more formidable: the Good Shepherd disappeared, the miracles of mercy declined, and were replaced by the details of the Passion and the horrors of the Last Judgment. Now it was that the modern conception of a witch—namely, a woman in compact with Satan, who could exercise the miraculous gift at pleasure, and who at night was transported through the air to the Sabbath, where she paid her homage to the Evil One—first appeared. Owing in part to its

insular position, in part to the intense political life which from the earliest period animated its people, there was formed in England a self-reliant type of character which was essentially distinct from that common in Europe, averse to the more depressing aspect of religion, and less subject to its morbid fears. In consequence, the darker superstitions which prevailed on the Continent, and which were to act so tragically on the imaginations of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, had not here arisen. Nevertheless, as will presently appear in our sketch of historical method, there existed a condition of thought so far removed from that of the present day as to be scarcely conceivable. It will show itself in literature as a controlling love of the marvellous; in religion, as the intellectual basis of witchcraft.

Religion.—When the island was yet without political unity, a Greek monk, sent from Rome, organized an episcopate, divided the land into parishes representing the different provinces of its disunited state, linked them all to Canterbury as ecclesiastical centre, and thus founded the *Church of England*. In veneration of the source of light, Anglo-Saxons began pilgrimages to the ‘Eternal City,’ in the hope that, dying there, a more ready acceptance would be accorded them by the saints in Heaven. In gratitude they established a tax, called St. Peter’s penny, for the relief of pilgrims and the education of the clergy. The claims of the Roman See, based as here upon filial regard, were to become a tremendous peril alike to monarch and to subject.

As Rome was the queen of cities, so, as the chief seat of Christianity, her Church was naturally held to be the first of Churches, and her bishop first of bishops—the Pope.¹ When the capital was transferred to Constantinople, and the Vandals had dissolved the framework of Roman society, he gradually became the chief man in Italy, indeed in the whole West. But wealth is dangerous to simplicity, and power to moderation. From being a father and a counsellor merely, forgetting humility, he became a schemer and a ruler. Love of souls was gradually supplanted by love of empire. The evil was possible to the system. Each country in Christendom was mapped out into an all-embracing territorial organization, in which the priest was under

¹ Meaning *father*, *papa*, Greek *πάπας*.

the bishop, he under the archbishop, and the archbishop in turn responsible to the pope, who thus held in his hand the converging reins of ecclesiastical control. While the prelates, each within his respective sphere, were encroaching little by little upon the laity, the Church of Rome was forming and maturing her plans to enthrall both the national churches and the temporal governments. A prime condition of conquest is a replete exchequer. Covetousness was characteristic. Gifts by the rich on assuming the cowl, by some before entering upon military expeditions, bequests by many in the terrors of dissolution; the commutation for money of penance imposed upon repentant offenders,—were a few of the various sources of her revenue. No atonement, she taught, could be so acceptable to Heaven as liberal donations to its earthly delegates. The rich widow was surrounded by a swarm of clerical sycophants who addressed her in terms of endearment and, under the guise of piety, lay in wait for a legacy. A special place, it was said, was reserved in purgatory for those who had been slow in paying their tithes. A man who in a contested election for the popedom had supported the wrong candidate, was placed after death in boiling water. The bereft widow, in the first dark hour of anguish, was told that he who was dearer to her than all the world besides, was now writhing in the flames that encircled him, and could be relieved only by a pecuniary present. Masterly adaptation of means to ends. The end of the twelfth century saw the Church at the zenith of territorial possession. She enjoyed nearly one-half of England, and a still greater portion in some countries of the Continent. To her John solemnly resigned his crown, and humbly received it as a fief. But landed acquisitions scarcely contributed so much to her greatness as ecclesiastical jurisdiction and immunity. Her spiritual court, claiming a loftier origin than the civil, acquired absolute exemption from secular authority, and ended by usurping almost the whole administration of justice. Kings were expected to obtain its sanction as a security to their thrones, and to hold those thrones by compliance with its demands. It could try citizens, but ecclesiastics were amenable to it only. The mainspring of her machinery was excommunication and interdict. The former was equivalent to outlawry. The victim was shunned, as one infected with the leprosy, by his servants, his friends, his

family. Two attendants only remained with an excommunicated king of France, and these threw all the meats that passed his table into the fire. By the latter—inflited perhaps to revenge a wounded pride—a county or a kingdom was under suspension of religious offices; churches were closed, bells silent, and the dead unburied. She also derived material support from the multitudinous monks, who, in return for extensive favors, vied with each other in magnifying the papal supremacy. The thirteenth century was the noonday of her predominance. Rome was once more the Niobe of nations; and kings, as of old, paid her homage. Vast sums from England flowed into her treasury, carried by pilgrims; by suitors with appeals in all manner of disputes; by prelates going thither for consecration and for the confirmation of their elections; by applicants for church preferment, which was almost exclusively at the Pope's disposal, and must be bought; by Italian priests who, pasturing on the richest benefices, drew an annual sum far exceeding the royal revenue. In 1300, Boniface VIII, straining to a higher pitch the despotic pretensions of former pontiffs, is said to have appeared at a festival dressed in imperial habits, with two swords borne before him, emblems of his temporal as well as spiritual sovereignty over the earth.

As the Church rose in splendor, she sank in vice. All her institutions had been noble in their first years, but success had ruined them. The monastic movement, inspired by a strong religious motive, tended to soften every sentiment of pride, to repress all worldly desires, to make preëminent the practice of charity, to give humility a foremost place in the hierarchy of virtues. Every monastery was a focus which radiated benevolence. By the monk, savage nobles were overawed, the poor protected, wayfarers comforted. Legend tells how St. Christopher planted himself, with his little boat, by a bridgeless stream, to ferry over travellers. Not without reward, for once, embarking on a very stormy and dangerous night, at the voice of distress, he received Christ. When hideous leprosy extended its ravages over Europe, while the minds of men were filled with terror by its contagion and supposed supernatural character, monks flocked in multitudes to serve in the hospitals. Sometimes, the legends say, the leper was in a moment transfigured, and he who came in mercy to the

most loathsome of mortals, found himself in the presence of his Lord. As organized later by St. Benedict, the monastery was the asylum of peaceful industry, the refuge of the flying peasant, the retreat of the timid, the abode of the princely, the portal to knowledge and dignity for the inquisitive and ambitious, a field of civilizing activity to the ardent and philanthropic, the symbol of moral power in an age of turbulence and war, the fountain whence issued far and wide a constant stream of missionaries,—often the nucleus of a city, where had been gigantic forests and inhospitable marshes. In the tenth century, when the English Church, inundated by the Danes, had fallen into worldliness and ignorance, Dunstan the reformer saw in vision a tree of wondrous height stretching its branches over Britain, its boughs laden with countless crows. In the revival of a stricter monasticism, he fancied, lay the remedy for Church abuses. The clergy were displaced by monks, bound by vows to a life of celibacy and religious exercise. Freed ere long by the popes from the control of the bishops, they speedily became ascendant in the Church, and so continued till the Reformation. Parish endowments were transferred to monasteries, of which Dunstan himself established forty-eight, setting an example widely followed in every quarter of the land. Pious, learned, and energetic as were the prelates of William's appointment, they were not English. In language, manner, and sympathy, they were thus severed from the lower priesthood and the people; and the whole influence of the Church was for the moment paralyzed. In the twelfth century a new spirit of devotion woke the slumber of the religious houses, and changed the aspect of town and country. Everywhere men banded themselves together for prayer, hermits flocked to the woods, noble and churl welcomed the austere Cistercians, a reformed offshoot of the Benedictine order. Their rule was one of the most severe mortification and self-denial. Their lives were spent in labor and prayer, and their one frugal daily meal was eaten in silence. They humbly asked for grants of land in the most solitary places, where they could meditate in retirement, amidst desolate moors and the wild gorges of inaccessible mountains. A hundred years later, when the administration of forms had become the sole occupation of the clergy, came the Friars,—Dominicans and Franciscans, to win back the public esteem and reanimate a waning religion.

They called the wind their brother, the water their sister, and poverty their bride. Incapable by the principle of their foundation of possessing estates, they subsisted on alms and pious remunerations. 'You need no little mountains to lift your heads to heaven,' was the scornful reply of Francis to a request for pilgrims. Only the sick went shod. An Oxford Friar found a pair of shoes one morning, and wore them. At night he dreamed that robbers leaped on him, with shouts of 'Kill, kill!' 'I am a Friar,' shrieked the terror-stricken brother. 'You lie,' was the instant answer, 'for you go shod.' In disproof he lifted up his foot, saw the shoe, and in an agony of repentance flung the pair out of the window. Says a contemporary:

'The Lord added, not so much a new order, as renewed the old, raised the fallen, and revived religion, now almost dead, in the evening of the world, hastening to its end, in the near time of the Son of Perdition. . . . They have no monasteries or churches, no fields, or vines, or beasts, or houses, or lands, or even where they may lay their head. They wear no furs or linen, only woolen gowns with a hood; no head-coverings, or cloaks, or mantles, or any other garments have they. If any one invite them, they eat and drink what is set before them. If any one, in charity, give them anything, they keep nothing of it to the morrow.'

Self-sacrificing love, for Christ, was the sun of their lives, food and shelter their reward. The recluse of the cloister was exchanged for the preacher. As the older orders had chosen the country, the Friars chose the town. In frocks of serge and girdles of rope, they wandered bare-foot on errands of salvation, fixed themselves in haunts where fever and pestilence festered, in huts of mud and timber mean as the huts around them. To the burgher and artisan, who had heard the mass-priest in an unknown tongue, spelling out what instruction they might from gorgeous ritual and graven wall, their preaching, fluent and familiar, was a wonder and a delight. Not deviating from the current faith, they professed rather to teach it in greater purity, while they imputed supineness and debasement to the secular clergy. They addressed the crowd in the public streets, with fervid appeal, rough wit, or telling anecdote, and administered the communion on a portable altar, carrying the multitude by their enthusiasm and novelty. Disinterested sincerity is at all times attractive to the popular heart, and, when associated with the hopes and fears of life, is irresistible. These Methodists started a revolution. There will be another such five hundred years hence. Had they been as faithful to their mission as the Wesleys to theirs, it had

been well. Seeing their power to move the masses, the pontiffs accumulated privileges upon them. The bishops were ordered to secure them a hearty reception. They were exempted from episcopal supervision; were permitted to preach or hear confessions without leave of the ordinary, to accept legacies, to inter any who desired it in their enclosure. The door was thus open to wealth, and wealth brought ruin. Even so early as 1243, Matthew Paris writes of them:

‘It is only twenty-four years since they built their first houses in England, and now they raise buildings like palaces, and show their boundless wealth by making them daily more sumptuous, with great rooms and lofty ceilings, impudently transgressing the vows of poverty which are the very basis of their order. If a great or rich man is like to die, they take care to crowd in, to the injury and slight of the clergy, that they may hunt up money, extort confessions, and make secret wills, always seeking the good of their order, as their one end. They have got it believed that no one can hope to be saved if he do not follow the Dominicans or Franciscans. They are restless in trying to get privileges; to get the ear of kings and princes, to be chamberlains, treasurers, bridesmen, and match-makers, and agents of papal extortions. In their preaching, they either flatter or abuse without bounds, or reveal confessions, or gabble nonsense.’

So had it ever been,—so, under a similar constitution, must it ever be. Vast societies living in enforced celibacy, exercising an unbounded influence, and possessing enormous riches, inevitably become hot-beds of corruption, when the zeal that created them expires. Monk, friar, clergy, pope, and Church reached ultimately one level. ‘You are a worthy man, though you be a priest,’ says a female speaker in a poem of the times. A bishop of the thirteenth century, while consecrating a church, was addressed by the devil, who stood behind the altar in a pontifical vestment: ‘Cease from consecrating the church; for it pertaineth to my jurisdiction, since it is built from the fruits of usuries and robberies.’ To give money to the priests was the chief article of the moral code, the surest means of atoning for crime and gaining Paradise. The ecclesiastical courts were perennial fountains, feeding the ecclesiastical coffers. Instituted to visit with temporal penalties the breach of the moral law, they were implements of mischief, a public scandal and oppression, when saints had ceased to wield them. So corrupt were both priests and monks, that an English bishop had to forbid those of his diocese from ‘haunting taverns, gambling, or drinking, and from rioting or debauchery.’ The common degeneracy was the normal result of the profound corruption at the centre of the Church—the See of Rome. Says Dante, addressing the popes:

‘Of gold and silver ye have made your god;
 Differing wherein from an idolater
 But that he worships one, a hundred ye?’

Four of them, of his own day, he locates in hell, and makes the last say:

‘Under my head are dragged
 The rest, my predecessors in the guilt
 Of simony.¹ Stretched at their length they lie.’

To the ambition of the Papacy a spirit of resistance, especially in England, had not been wanting. William the Conqueror, asserting the royal supremacy, had sternly refused to do fealty for his throne, and exacted homage from bishops as from barons. While the effect of his policy had been to weld the English Church more firmly with Rome—a dependence from which it had hitherto been preserved by its insular position—he had vigorously maintained the subjection of the ecclesiastical to the civil. Henry II, vindicating the authority of the state, had required that every priest degraded for his misdeeds should be given up to the civil tribunals. Edward I had compelled the clergy to pay taxes and forbidden bequests to any religious bodies without the king’s license. Pillaged by the pope upon every slight pretence, without law and without redress, chafed by the immunities of the mendicant orders, the clergy came to regard their once paternal monarch as an arbitrary oppressor. The venality and avarice of pope, clergy, and mendicants, were sapping the ancient reverence of the people for each. Among the laity, a spirit of inveterate hatred had grown up, not only towards the papal tyranny, but the whole ecclesiastical system. It was complained that English money was pouring into Rome; that the best livings were given by the Roman See to non-resident strangers; that the clergy, being judged only by the clergy, abandoned themselves to their vices, and abused their state of immunity. In the first years of the reign of Henry III, a hundred murders were committed by priests then alive. Walter Map, a bright man of the world, with a high purpose in his life, had personified the prevalent corruption under the assumed name of a gluttonous dignitary,—Bishop Golias,² who confesses the levity of his mind, its lustful desires; recalls the tavern he has never scorned, nor will till the angels sing his requiem; images

¹ Buying or selling ecclesiastical preferment.

² From *gula*, the gullet.

the heavens opening upon him as he lies intoxicated, too weak to hold the wine cup he has put to his lips, so dying in his shame: 'What I set before me is to die in a tavern; let there be wine put to my mouth when I am dying, that the choirs of the angels when they come may say, "The grace of God be on this bibber!"' Golias' poetry became a fashion, and the earnest man of genius had plenty of co-laborers.

We must think of these things if we would understand the deep union that subsists between literature and religion, if we would comprehend the signs of the times and the voices of the future, or interpret the countless crowd of quaint and often beautiful legends which, while they witness to the activity of the time, reveal, better than decrees of councils, what was realized in the imagination or enshrined in the heart.

We must think of them, too, if we would understand that grand awakening of reason and conscience which is the Reformation. Every great change has its root in the soul, long preparing, far back in the national soil. Already have we had premonitory throes of the moral earthquake. We shall see the storm gather and pass, once and again, without breaking. The discontent will spread. The welling spring, despite the efforts to repress it, will bubble and leap, till its surplus overflows, bursting asunder its constraint. While men of low birth and low estate are stealing by night along the lanes and alleys of London, carrying some dear treasure of books at the peril of their lives, the finger that crawls around the dial plate will touch the hour, and the mighty fabric of iniquity will be shivered into ruins.

But amid the sins and failings of the Church, let us not forget the priceless blessings she bestowed upon mankind. The inundations of barbarian invasion left her a virgin soil, and made her for a long period the chief and indeed the sole centre of civilization,—the one mighty witness for light in an age of darkness, for order in an age of lawlessness, for personal holiness in an epoch of licentious rage.

She suppressed the bloody and imbruting games of the amphitheatre, discouraged the enslavement of prisoners, redeemed captives from servitude, established slowly the international principle that no Christian prisoners should be reduced to slavery;

created a new warrior ideal,—the ideal knight of the Crusades and chivalry, wedding the Christian virtues of humility and tenderness with the natural graces of courtesy and strength, rarely or never perfectly realized, yet the type and model of warlike excellence to which many generations aspired.

She imparted a moral dignity to the servile class, by introducing into the ideal type of morals the servile virtues of humility, obedience, gentleness, patience, resignation; and by associating poverty and labor with the monastic life so profoundly revered. When men, awed and attracted by reports of the sanctity and miracles of some illustrious saint, made pilgrimages to behold him, and found him in peasant's garb, with a scythe on his shoulder, sharing and superintending the work of the farm, or sitting in a small attic mending lamps, they could hardly fail to return with an increased sense of the dignity of toil.

By inclining the moral type to the servile position, she gave an unexampled impetus to the movement of enfranchisement. The multitude of slaves who embraced the new faith was one of the reproaches of the Pagans. The first and grandest edifice of Byzantine architecture in Italy was dedicated by Justinian to the memory of a martyred slave. Manumission, though not proclaimed a matter of duty or necessity, was always regarded as one of the most acceptable expiations of sin. Clergy and laity freed their slaves as an act of piety. It became customary to do so on occasions of national or personal thanksgiving, on recovery from sickness, on the birth of a child, at the hour of death, in testamentary bequests. In the thirteenth century, when there were no slaves to emancipate in France, caged pigeons were released on ecclesiastical festivals, in memory of the ancient charity, and that prisoners might still be freed in the name of Christ.

None of her achievements are more truly great than those she effected in the sphere of charity. For the first time in history, she inspired thousands to devote their entire lives, through sacrifice and danger, to the single object of assuaging the sufferings of humanity. Uniting the idea of supreme goodness with that of active and constant benevolence, she covered the globe with institutions of mercy unknown to pagan Rome and Greece. Through disastrous eclipse and wintry night, we may trace the

subduing influence of her spell, blending strangely with every excess of violence and every outburst of superstition. Of an Irish chieftain—the most ferocious that ever defied the English power—it is related, amid a legion of horrible crimes, that, ‘sitting at meat, before he put one morsel into his mouth, he would slice a portion above the daily alms, and send it to some beggar at the gate, saying it was meet to serve Christ first.’

The monastic bodies that everywhere arose, were an invaluable counterpoise to military violence; pioneers in most forms of peaceful labor; green spots in a wilderness of rapine and tumult, where the feeble and persecuted could find refuge. As secure repositories for books, when libraries were almost unknown, they bridged the chaos of the Middle Ages, and linked the two periods of ancient and modern civilization.

The Church peopled the imagination with forms of tender beauty and gentle pathos, which—more than any dogmatic teaching—softened and transformed the character, till it learned to realize the sanctity of weakness and the majesty of compassion. The lowliness and sorrow of her Founder, the grace of His person, the agonies of Gethsemane or of Calvary, the gentleness of the Virgin Mother, are the pictures which, for eighteen hundred years, have inspired the hearts of men with an impassioned love, formed the governing ideals of the rudest and most ignorant, furnished the highest patterns of virtue and the strongest incentives to its practice. Here, in the character and example of the crucified Nazarene, Christianity finds an enduring principle of regeneration, by which, though shrouded by disastrous eclipse or dimmed by passing mist, her light is never quenched,—by which, when luxury, ambition, worldliness and vice have wounded her well-nigh to death, she has renewed her strength like the eagle, has run and not been weary, has walked and not been faint. So has her mightiest apology, from age to age, been lives of holiness and fidelity; and never, though she seemed to be dying, has she lacked such. Side by side with those who lived and schemed in ecclesiastical politics as their chosen element, were men to whom worldly honors were indifferent,—to whose meekness and self-denial, more than to diadem, tiara, sword, or logic, she owes her empire over the human heart.

Learning.—From the age of Augustus, Latin and Greek

learning which we call ancient or classical, sensibly declined, first by organic decay; and its downfall, begun by disease, was accelerated by violence. Libraries were destroyed, schools closed, and intellectual energy of a secular kind almost ceased, in the irruption of the Northern barbarians, who gloried in their original rudeness, and viewed with disdain arts that had neither preserved their cultivators from degeneracy nor raised them from servitude.

A collateral cause of this prostration was the neglect, by the Christian Church, of Pagan literature. For the most part, the study of the Latin classics was positively discouraged: The writers, it was believed, were burning in hell. When a monk, under the discipline of silence, desired to ask for Virgil, Horace, or other Gentile author, he was wont to signify his wish by scratching his ear like a dog, to which animal it was thought the Pagans might properly be compared.

The human intellect, sinking deeper every age into stupidity and superstition, reached its lowest point of depression about the middle of the eleventh century. On the survey of society, no circumstance is so prominent as the depth of ignorance in which it was immersed. It was rare for a layman, of whatever rank, to know how to sign his name. Contracts were made verbally. The royal charters, instead of the names of the kings, sometimes exhibit their mark—the cross. In England, Alfred declares that he could not recollect a single priest who, at his accession, understood the common prayers, or could render a Latin sentence into English.

The darkness which reigned far and wide was rendered unavoidable, among other causes, by the scarcity of books, which—as they were in manuscript form, and written or copied with cost, labor, and delay—could be procured only at an immense price. In 855, a French abbot sent two of his monks to the Pope, to beg a copy of Cicero's *De Oratore*, of Quintilian's *Institutes*, and some others; 'for, although we have part of these books, yet there is no whole or complete copy of them in all France.' In Spain at the beginning of the tenth century one and the same copy of the Bible often served different monasteries. In 1299, the bishop of Winchester, borrowing a copy of the Bible with marginal notes, gives a solemn bond for due return of the loan. A book donated to a religious house was

believed to merit eternal salvation, and was offered on the altar with great ceremony. Sometimes a book was given to a private party, with the reservation, 'Pray for my soul.' When a book was bought, persons of consequence and character were assembled to make formal record that they were present on the occasion. It was common to lend money on the deposit of a book. In the universities were chests for the reception of books so deposited. Bede records that Benedict sold a volume to his sovereign Alfred for eight hides of land—about eight hundred acres.

Moreover, when Latin ceased to be a living tongue, the whole treasury of knowledge was locked up from the eyes of the people. In this linguistic corpse were sealed the Scriptures, the liturgy, and the teachings of the Christian Fathers, and there they were tenaciously held. Through this venerable medium, as a learned language, the Church of Rome stood in an attitude strictly European, enabled to maintain a general international relation. Its prevalence was the condition of her unity, and therefore of her power. Thus, intent upon her own emoluments and temporalities, by guarding from the unlearned vulgar this key to erudition, she was yet the sole hope for literature. Learning was confined almost wholly to the ecclesiastical order. Manuscripts found secure repositories in the abbeys, which floated through the storms of war and conquest, like the Ark upon the waves of the flood; in the midst of violence remaining inviolate, through the awful reverence which surrounded them. The monastery became the one sphere of intellectual labor. Here with no craving for human fame, were composed the sermons and defences of mediæval faith, and the voluminous Lives of Saints—heroic patterns of excellence which each Christian within his own limits was endeavoring to realize. Here the monkish scholar, his hopes fixed upon the pardon of his sins and the rewards of the unseen life, pursued his studies in a spirit which has now almost faded from the world. In the deep calm and chilly barrenness of the *Scriptorium*—what the printing-office is to us—might be seen the sombre figures of the tonsured workmen, whose task it was, seated at the rude desks or tables, to copy and adorn, letter by letter, point by point, the precious manuscripts that filled the wooden chests ranged around the naked stone walls. With pen-

cil of hair, pen of reed or quill, and ink of many-hued splendors, the artist laid on colors and produced designs which for richness and beauty command our admiration; on papyrus or parchment, writing the headings in bright red; forming the initial letter of a chapter with a brilliant tracery, in scarlet and gold and blue lace-work, of intermingled flowers and birds; tracing in black the thick perpendicular strokes of the text-hand; then when the book is finished—which may be the work of years if the decorations are minute and profuse, painting the title in scarlet, with the name of the copyist in colors at the foot of the last page, and a marginal embroidery of angelic and human figures, birds, beasts and fishes, flowers, shells and leaves.

But as in the natural world every night brightens into a new morning, so in the spiritual the sun of science, having reached its nadir of decline, begins its reascension to the zenith, throwing out many premonitory gleams of light ere the dawn reddens into the lustre of day.

The leading circumstances in the gradual renewal of European thought are the study of civil law, presaging progress in the science of government; the development of modern languages, with its taste for poetry and its swarm of lay poets; the cultivation, in the twelfth century, of Latin classics, quotations from which, however, during the Dark Ages, were hardly to be called unusual; the partial restoration of Greek literature—mathematical, physical, and metaphysical, which, with the exception of scattered instances where some ‘petty patristic treatise’ or later commentator on Aristotle was rendered into Latin, had been almost entirely forgotten within the pale of the Romish Church, but now in the eleventh century, imported across the Pyrenees into France from the Arab conquerors of Spain, glimmered with pulsation of—

‘That earlier dawn
Whose glimpses are again withdrawn,
As if the morn had waked, and then
Shut close her lids of light again.’

Lastly, as the special mark of that new fervor of study which sprang up in the West from its contact with the more civilized East,—the institution of universities.

From an early period, in England as well as elsewhere, there were schools, though in general confined to the cathedrals and monasteries, and designed exclusively for religious purposes.

Nor is it to be presumed that the laity, though excluded, as a rule, from the benefits of a liberal training, were left wholly without the means of obtaining some elementary instruction. Canterbury, Yarrow, and York commemorate the golden age of Old English scholarship. Alcuin was called from the last to the court of Charlemagne, to assist him in the educational reform of France. In a letter to his patron he enumerates, in the fantastic rhetoric of the period, the branches in which he instructed his pupils at Paris:

‘To some I administer the honey of the sacred writings; others I try to inebriate with the wine of the ancient classics. I begin the nourishment of some with the apples of grammatical subtlety. I strive to illuminate many by the arrangement of the stars, as from the painted roof of a lofty palace.’

That is, *Grammar, Greek and Latin, Astronomy and Theology*. Here is a specimen of the literary conversations of the palace school:

‘What is writing?—The guardian of History. What is speech?—The interpreter of the soul. What is it that gives birth to speech?—The tongue. What is the tongue?—The whip of the air. What is air?—The preserver of life. What is life?—A joy for the happy, a pain for the miserable, the expectation of death. What is death?—An inevitable event, an uncertain voyage, a subject of tears for the living, the confirmation of testaments, the robber of men. . . . What is heaven?—A moving sphere, an immense vault. What is light?—The torch of all things. What is the day?—A call to labor. What is the sun?—The splendor of the universe, the beauty of the firmament, the grace of nature, the glory of the day, the distributor of the hours. . . . What is friendship?—The similarity of souls. . . .

‘As you are a youth of good disposition, and endowed with natural capacity, I will put to you several other unusual questions: endeavor to solve them.—I will do my best; if I make mistakes, you must correct them. I shall do as you desire. Some one who is unknown to me has conversed with me, having no tongue and no voice; he was not before, he will not be hereafter, and I neither heard nor knew him. What means this?—Perhaps a dream moved you, master? Exactly so, my son. Still another one. I have seen the dead engender the living, and the dead consumed by the breath of the living.—Fire was born from the rubbing of branches, and it consumed the branches.’

Such are the giants of a generation—glimmering lights that, hardly breaking the leaden cloud of ignorance, owe much of their distinction to the surrounding gloom. The studies pursued at York, the same writer informs us, comprehended, besides grammar, rhetoric, and poetry,—

‘The harmony of the sky, the labor of the sun and moon, the five zones, the seven wandering planets; the laws, risings, and settings of the stars, and the aerial motions of the sea; earthquakes; the nature of man, cattle, birds, and wild beasts, with their various kinds and forms; and the sacred Scriptures.’

In short, a long established division of literary and scientific knowledge was the *Trivium*, embracing Grammar, Rhetoric, and

Logic; and *Quadrivium*, embracing Music, Arithmetic, Geometry, and Astronomy; all of which were referred to theology, and that in the narrowest manner. To be perfect in the three former was a rare accomplishment; and scarcely any one mastered the latter four. John of Salisbury, writing in the twelfth century, when the simplicity of this arrangement had been outgrown, says:

‘The Trivium and the Quadrivium were so much admired by our ancestors in former ages, that they imagined they comprehended all wisdom and learning, and were sufficient for the solution of all questions and the removing of all difficulties; for whoever understood the Trivium could explain all manner of books without a teacher; but he who was farther advanced, and was master also of Quadrivium, could answer all questions and unfold all the secrets of nature.’

But in the twelfth century, the older educational foundations burst into the larger, freer life of the universities, whose democratic spirit threatened feudalism, and whose intellectual spirit threatened the Church, though to outer seeming they were ecclesiastical bodies. None of these grew so early into fame as that of Paris, unrivalled for theological discussion. Here the rationalism of Abelard, the knight-errant of philosophy, drew down the menaces of councils and the thunders of Rome. Said the Council of Sens in 1140:

‘He makes void the whole Christian faith by attempting to comprehend the nature of God through human reason. He ascends up into Heaven; he goes down into hell. Nothing can elude him, either in the height above or in the nethermost depths. His branches spread over the whole earth. He boasts that he has disciples in Rome itself, even in the College of Cardinals. He draws the whole earth after him. It is time, therefore, to silence him by apostolic authority.’

So great was the influx of his disciples, that the boundaries of the city were enlarged. When he retired to solitude the wilderness became a town. Twenty cardinals and fifty bishops had been among his hearers.

At the opening of the thirteenth century, Oxford was second only to Paris in the multitude of its students and the celebrity of its disputations. Thirty thousand scholars, thinking more of success in polemics than of the truths involved, swelled the stir and turbulence of its life. Yet be not deceived. Thousands of pupils poorly lodged, clustering around teachers as poor as themselves,—drinking, quarrelling, begging; retainers fighting out the feuds of their young lords in the streets; roisterer and reveller roaming with torches through the dark and filthy lanes, defying bailiffs and cutting down citizens; a tavern row spread-

ing into a general broil, bells clanging to arms,—this is the seething, surging Oxford of mediæval history. Upon the vision of these young and valiant minds flashed, as they thought, the temple of truth, and they rushed at it headlong, as knightly warriors with battle-axe might storm a castle.

Language.—The principal literature was in Latin, and, after the Conquest, in French. The former—the only language in which the scholar might hope to address, not merely the few among a single people, but the whole Republic of Letters—was used in books habitually, as the common language of the educated throughout Europe. In it were written, in particular, most works on subjects of theology, science, and history; in the latter, those intended rather to amuse than to instruct, and addressed, not to students, but to the idlers of the court and the gentry, by whom they were seldom read, but only heard as they were recited or chanted. In the thirteenth century, French acquired that widely diffused currency as a generally known and hence convenient common medium which it has ever since maintained. A Venetian annalist of the time composed his chronicle in it, because, to use his own words: ‘The French tongue is current throughout the world, and is more delectable to read and hear than any other.’ Dante’s teacher employed it, and thus apologized for using it instead of Italian:

‘If any shall ask why this book is written in Romance, according to the *patois* of France, I being born Italian, I will say it is for divers reasons. The one is that I am now in France; the other is that French is the most delightful of tongues, and partaketh most of the common nature of all other languages.’

Its frequent use by English writers is to be ascribed, not wholly to the predominance of Norman influence, but, in a considerable degree, to the fact that, for the time, it occupied much the same position as had hitherto been awarded to the Latin as the common dialect of learned Europe.

Of the vernacular, many of the most important terms, ethical and mental, had become obsolete. Of foreign words in it, there were yet relatively few. The whole number of Romance derivatives found in the printed works of authors of the thirteenth century scarcely exceeds one thousand, or one-eighth of the total vocabulary of that era. What would the myriad-minded Shakespeare, with his vast requirement of fifteen thousand, have done

in this age, with its pittance of eight thousand words? The following extract is from the Proclamation of Henry III, addressed in 1258 to the people of Huntingdon, copies being sent to all the shires of England and Ireland. Prepositions, it will be observed, are doing the work of the lost inflections; and the sense is made to depend upon the sequence of the words alone:

'Henry, thurg Godes fultume
King on Englene-loande . . .
send igreteinge to all hise
halde ilaerde and ilaewede.
Thaet witen ye wel alle, thaet we
willen and unnen thaet thaet ure raedes-
men alle othere, the moare dæl of heom,
thaet beoth ichosen thurg us. . . And
this wes idon æt foren ure isworene redes-
men. And al on tho ilche worden is
isend in to ænrihce othere schire over all
thaere kunicriche on Englene-loande and ek
intel Irelande.'

'Henry, through God's grace
king in England . . .
sends greeting to all his
subjects, learned and unlearned.
This know ye well all, that we
will and grant, that what our council-
lors all or the more deal of them,
that are chosen by us. . . And
this was done before our sworn council-
lors. And all in the same words is
sent into every other shire over all
the kingdom in England and eke
into Ireland.'

The popular speech was forcing its way to the throne.

Poetry.—In early periods, feeling and fancy, with nations as with children, are strongest. Emotion seeks utterance before logic; and the natural expression of emotion is a chant, a song. There is a real kinship between the waves of excited feeling and the rhythmical cadence of words which utter it. Early literature, therefore, is almost exclusively one of poetry. Language, too, then picturesque and bold, lives chiefly on the tongue and in the ear; and poetry, by its rhythm, uniting with the charm of music, allows an oral transfer which prose does not. Rhythm—the recurrence of sounds and silences at regular intervals of time, the essential principle of poetry—is the oldest and widest artistic instinct in man; for man is the emotive part of nature, and the movement of nature, it is the grand distinction of modern science to have shown, is rhythmic. Light and heat go in undulations; the seasons, the sun-spots, come and go in correspondencies; the variable stars brighten and pale at rhythmic intervals; the ocean-tides and trade-winds flow by rhythmic rule; planet, satellite, and comet revolve and return in proportionate periods. The mystic Hindoo's doctrine of the primal diffusion of matter in space, the aggregation of atoms into worlds, the revolution of these worlds, their necessary absorption into Brahma, their necessary rediffusion, again to be aggregated, and again to be absorbed,—ever

contracting, ever expanding,—what is this but the rhythmic beating of the heart of the Eternal—a divine shuttle that weaves a definite pattern into the chaotic fabric of things? After two thousand years or more, we are beginning to see dimly into Pythagoras' fanciful dream of 'the music of the spheres'; Plato's dictum, 'Time itself is the moving image of Eternity'; and the Orphic saying of the seer, 'The father of metre is rhythm, and the father of rhythm is God.'

During the antique and mediæval periods, music, though in process of differentiation, has no confirmed separate existence from poetry; and both are at first united in closest bonds with the dance. The poet is then a wandering minstrel—*Gleeman*, the Saxons called him. His training from early childhood was to store his memory with the poetic legends of his land; and when later he wove into rude verse the story of his own day, it went nameless into the common stock of the craft. When the shadows had fallen, and the festive hall was filled, while the beer-horn passed merrily from mouth to mouth, the Gleeman with his 'wood of joy' roused or soothed the fiery passions of the warriors as he related the deeds of the heroic dead or sung the praises of their posterity, chanting to his harp, now one adventure, now another, as the guests or their lord might call for this or that favorite incident. No festival was complete without him and his harp. He travelled far and wide, songster, poet, and historian, everywhere received with consideration. By the winter fire or beneath the summer trees, flushed brows grew a darker red, or the war-shout faded into gentler tones, as war or love varied the theme of his wild rough melody. Proudly says one of them, who had dwelt with the high-born of many lands:

'Thus North and South, where'er they roam,
The sons of song still find a home,
Speak unreprieved their wants, and raise
Their grateful lay of thanks and praise;
For still the chief who seeks to grace
By fairest fame his pride of place,
Withholds not from the sacred Bard
His well-earned praise and high reward;
But free of hand and large of soul,
Where'er extends his wide control,
Unnumbered gifts his princely love proclaim,
Unnumbered voices raise to heaven his princely name.'

As to form, Saxon poetry illustrates the overpowering passion of the English ear for 3-rhythm, or the recurrence of the rhythmic accent at that interval of time represented by three units of any sort,—no matter among how many sounds this amount of time may be distributed. The prevailing type is an alternation of feet, or ‘bars,’ of the form $\frac{3}{8}$ ♪ ♪ ♪ | with bars of the form $\frac{3}{8}$ ♪ ♪ |; the musical sign ♪—called an ‘eighth-note’—representing a sound whose duration is that of an ordinary syllable, and the sign ♪—called a ‘quarter-note’—representing a sound twice as long. The type may be varied from bar to bar, to prevent the movement from growing monotonous, thus yielding the effect of an ‘air with variations.’ In the rhythm of hurrying rush and martial din, Byrhtnoth defies the invading pirates in *The Battle of Maldon*:

Brim - man - na bod - a, a - beod eft on - gean;

se - ge thin - um leod-um micl - e lath - re spell, thaet

her stent un - for - cuth eorl mid his we - ro - de

the wi - le gealg - i - an e - thel thys - ne,

Æth - el - ræd - es eard, eald - res min - es,

folc and fold - an: feal - lan sceol - on

‘Brimmana boda, abeod eft ongean;
sege thinum leodum micle lathre spell,
thaet her stent unforcuth eorl mid his werode,

the wile gealgian ethel thysne,
Æthelrædes eard, ealdres mines,
folc and foldan: feallan sceolon
hæthene æt hilde. Too heanlic me thynceth,

Herald of pirates, be herald once more:
bear to thy people a bitterer message,—
that here stands dauntless an earl with
his warriors,
who will keep us this country,
land of my lord, Prince Æthelred,
folk and field: perish shall
the heathen in battle. Too base, me
thinketh,

that ge mid urum sceattum to scipe gangon
unbefohtene, nu ge thus feor hider
ou nre eard inn becomon;
ne sceole ge swa softe sinc gegangan,

us sceal ord and ecg ær geseman
grimm guthplega, ær we gafol syllon.'

that ye with gold should to ship get
unfought, now ye thus far hither
to be in our land have come;
never shall ye so soft go hence with your
treasure:

us shall point and blade persuade—
grim game of war—ere we pay for peace.

Each line, it is seen, consists of four bars; each bar, of a number of syllables which mark off determinate periods of time for the ear. The first note in a bar, as every musician understands, is to be given with a slight increase of intensity—stress or accent. The same form appears in the Anglo-Saxon epic of *Beowulf*:

$\frac{3}{8}$    |   |   |   |

Tha waes on heal - le heard - ecg to - gen,
There was in hall (the) falch - ion brand - ished,

   |   |   |   |

Sweord o - fer setl - um, sid - rand man - ig
Swords o - ver bench - es, buck - ler man - y

  |    |    |   |

haf - en hand - a fæst helm ne ge - muud - e
(was) hov - en, hand - in fast, helmet not mind - ed.

Again, in the mournful melody of *The Wanderer*:

$\frac{3}{8}$   |    |    |   |

Oft him au - ha - ga a - re ge - bid - eth,
Oft the Solitary (for) mer - cy pray - eth,

   |   |    |   |

Met - od - es milts - e, theah the he mod - cea - rig
(for) God's compassion, though he, mood - careful,

   |   |    |   |

geond lag - u - lad - e long - e sceold - e
over (the) water - ways long (time) should

   |   |    |   |

hre - ran mid hond - um hrim - cald - e sæ.
stir with (his) hands rime - cold (the) sea.

Old English verse has one peculiarity to establish and fortify its rhythm. This is alliteration. The first three bars or feet begin, in most lines, with the same consonant-color; less frequently with the same vowel-color; sometimes the two middle bars begin alike,

or the first and third. The dominant type is illustrated by the following passage from *The Phoenix*,—the third line excepted, which presents the second:





‘Ne *Forestes Fnaest*, ne *Fyres blæst*,
 ne *Hægles Hryre*, ne *Hrymes dryre*,
 ne *Sunnan hætu*, ne *Sincald*,
 ne *Warm Weder*, ne *Winter scnr*,
Wihte ge Wirdan, ac se *Wong seomath*.’

Inasmuch as the alliterative letter is the initial letter of an important word,—moreover, of an important sound of that word,—the rhythmic beat, by this coincidence of pronunciative, logical, and rhythmic accent, is rendered strong and commanding. Anon we may hear the sharp ringing blows of the hammer upon the anvil:

‘ <i>Flah mah Fliteth</i>	The strong dart flitteth,
<i>Flan man hwiteth</i> ,	The spear man whetteth,
<i>Burg sorg Biteth</i> ,	The town sorrow biteth,
<i>Bald ald thwiteth</i> ,	The bold age quelleth,
<i>Wræc-fæc Writeth</i> ,	Wreck suspicion worketh,
<i>Wrath ath smiteth</i> .’	Wrath the city smiteth. ¹

This fondness for alliteration lives imperishably in a thousand proverbs, saws, and sayings; as, ‘*Many men, many minds*,’ ‘*Time and tide wait for no man*.’

As suggested by these extracts, another feature of Saxon verse, though occurring much less freely, is rhyme, at once a color and an artifice to mark agreeably for the ear each rhythmic group of bars,—a marble statue on the highway instead of a mile-stone. In brief resounding metre, with the measured stroke of a passing bell, a converted warrior, passing into the shadows of the Night, reviews in quick luminous vision the pride and glory of his morning and noon:

$\frac{3}{8}$						
	Wic	o	fer		wong	- um
						
	Wen	-	nan		gong	- um
						
	Lis	- se	mid		long	- um
	Leo	- ma	ge	-	tong	- um.

¹ From the *Exeter Book*, comprising the main body of the first English poetry.

Me lifes onlah
 Se this leoht onwrah,
 And thæt torhte geteoh
 Tillice onwrah.
 Gled was ic gliwum,
 Glenged hiwum,
 Blissa bleounn
 Blostma hiwum. . .
 Horsce mec heredon,
 Hilde generedon,
 Fægere feredon,
 Feondon biwiredon. . .
 Sealcas wæron scarpe
 Scyl wæs hearpe.
 Hulde hlyneðe,
 Hleothor dynede,
 Swegl-rad swinsade
 Swithe, ne minsade. . .
 Nu min hrether is hreoh
 Heoh-sithum sceoh,
 Nyð bisgum neah;
 Gewited nihtes infleah
 Se ær in dæge was dyre. . .
 Wid sith onginneth,
 Sar ne sinneth,
 Sorgum cinnith,
 Blæd his blinnith,
 Blisse linnath,
 Listum linneth,
 Lustum ne cinneth.
 Dreamas swa her gedresath,
 Dryht scyre gehreosath; . . .
 Thonne lichoma ligeth,
 Linna wyrn friteth,
 Ac him wen ne gewigeth,
 And tha wist gehygeth;
 Oththæt beath tha ban an. . .

He raised me to life
 Who displayed this light,
 And this bright possession
 Bountifully disclosed.
 Glad was I in glee,
 Adorned with [fair] colors,
 With the hues of bliss
 And the tints of blossoms. . .
 Warriors obeyed me,
 Delivered me in battle,
 Fairly supported me,
 Protected me from enemies. . .
 My servants were sagacious,
 There was skill in their harping.
 It resounded loud,
 The strain reëchoed,
 Melody was heard
 Powerfully, nor did it cease. . .
 But now my breast is stormy
 Shaken by the season of woe,
 Need is nigh;
 And night's approach torments him
 Who before in the day was dear. . .
 A wide journey beginneth,
 Affliction ceaseth not;
 He exclaimeth in sorrows,
 His joy hath ceased,
 His bliss hath declined,
 He is fallen from his delights;
 He exclaimeth not in happiness.
 Thus glories here are prostrated,
 And the lordly lot brought low; . . .
 Then the corpse lieth,
 Worm fretteth the limbs,
 And the worm departeth not,
 And there chooseth its repast,
 Until there be bone only left.¹ . . .

In style, it is seen to be elliptical and inverted, abrupt, exclamatory, and glowing, the more vigorous by the absence of the usual particles,—a concrete of quick, passionate images, like a succession of lightning-flashes. Alfred thus renders a sentence

¹ After this exposition of Anglo-Saxon verse-form, the following statements may appear to the reader not a little surprising:

'In none (of the Anglo-Saxon poems) is found the slightest trace of temporal rhythm.'—*Dr. Guest*.

'The number of unaccented syllables is indifferent.'—*Sweet*.

'It was not written in rime nor were its syllables counted.'—*Rev. Stopford Brooke*.

'We do not see any marks of studied alliteration in the old Saxon poetry.'—*Tyrwhitt*.

'There is no rhyme, and no counting of syllables.'—*Morley*.

'Their poets . . . arranged their vernacular verses without any distinct rules'; and again, 'They used it [alliteration] without special rules.'—*Copple*.

'Nor is there any rhyming, for rhyme was an adornment unknown in English poetry until after the Norman Conquest.'—*Shaw*.

'No work in which rhyme or metre was used, can be traced in our literature until after the Norman Conquest.'—*Collier*.

of prose — ‘So doth the moon with his pale light, that the bright stars he obscures in the heavens’ — into verse:

‘With pale light
Bright stars
Moon lesseneth.’

Or again:

‘Then went over the sea-waves, Hurried by the wind, The ship with foamy neck, Most like a sea-fowl; Till about one hour Of the second day The curved prow Had passed onward,	So that the sailors The land saw, The shore-cliffs shining, Mountains steep, And broad sea-noses. Then was the sea sailing Of the Earl at an end.’
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From the life we have traced, we can infer the kind of poetry most in harmony with Old English sentiments. Its poetry will be the revelation of its soul,—the embodiment of its ideals; and human ideals, in the young generations of the world as in the old, are determined by the point of view at which men stand, being little or great, serene or stormy, sincere or hollow, as is the life of the artist, whether that artist be one or a community, one age or many ages. Every people has its Hercules or Samson—its ideal of brute force, of vast bodily strength or cunning, who strangles serpents, rends lions, and slaughters hostile hosts. A type perceptibly higher is the valiant one whose might, prowess, and indomitable will exorcise his native land of giant-fiends or dragons,—a heroic Captain, peradventure, true-hearted, just, and noble. Such is the central figure of our nameless English epic,—*Beowulf*, imported from the Continental homestead and revised by an unknown Christian bard: Christian, for none other could have spoken of Cain; none other would have called the people heathens; none other would have said:

‘When sorrow on him came and pain befell,
He left the joy of men and chose God’s light.’

Beowulf is a hero, a knight-errant before the days of chivalry, who, with his sword hard in his hand, has rowed ‘amidst the fierce waves and coldest of storms, and the rage of the winter hurtled over the waves of the deep’; whom the many-colored foes, sea monsters, drew to the bottom of the sea, and held fast in their gripe, but he reached ‘the wretches with his point and with his war-bill.’ Across the path of the swans (the sea) he comes

to succor the Danish King Hrothgar, in whose hall, where the banquet, the song, and the dance were wont to go on, is much sorrow; for Grendel, 'a mighty haunter of the marshes,' has entered during the night, seized thirty of the sleeping warriors, and returned with their carcasses to his fen-dwelling. For twelve winters' tide, the fiend has devoured men, till the best of houses stand empty. Beowulf, the valiant, offers to grapple with the dreadful ogre, asking only that if death takes him, they will mark his burial place, and send to his chief the war-shroud that guards his breast. When the mists have risen and all is still, Grendel enters in hope of dainty glut, seizes a sleeping warrior, bites his bone-casings, drinks the blood from the veins, and swallows him with 'continual tearings.' But the hero seizes him in turn, and, when he would fain return to his haunt, holds him:

'These warders strong waxed wrathful, fiercer grew,
The hall resounded; wonder much there was
That it so well withstood the warring beasts,—
That fell not to the earth this fair land-house.

.

And then arose strange sound; upon the Danes
Dire terror stood, of all who heard the whoop,
The horrid lay of God's denier,
The song that sang defeat and pain bewailed—
Hell's captive's lay—for in his grasp too firm
Did he, of men the strongest, hold his prey.'

In his efforts to get away, the monster's sinews spring asunder, the bone-casings burst; and leaving on the ground his hand, arm, and shoulder, he flees to his joyless home, 'sick unto death,' for 'the number of his days was gone by.' Then are great rejoicings in the palace. But there remains the 'sea-wolf of the abyss, the mighty sea-woman,' his mother, who comes by night, and amidst drawn swords tears and devours the king's chosen friend. Again Beowulf offers himself, seeks the ogress in her dread abode, where strange dragons and serpents swim, and one by night may behold the marvel of fire upon the flood, while ever and anon the horn sings a wild terrible dirge. He plunges into the surge, descends, passes monsters who tear his coat of mail, to the 'hateful man-slayer.' She seizes the champion in her horrid clutches, and bears him off to her den, where a pale gleam shines brightly and shows them face to face. With his 'beam of war' he smites on her head till 'the ring-mail' sings

‘aloud a greedy war-song’; but the weapon will not ‘bite.’ She overthrows him, but he rescues himself, espies ‘an old gigantic sword, doughty of edge, ready for use, the work of giants.’ ‘Fierce and savage, despairing of life,’ he strikes furiously, so that it grapples ‘hard with her about the neck,’ breaks ‘the bone-rings,’ passes through the doomed body, which sinks, and all is silent:

‘The sword was bloody, the man rejoiced in his deed; the beam shone, light stood within, even as from heaven mildly shines the lamp of the firmament.’

Another triumph, and renewed joy. Afterwards he is himself ruler. When he had reigned fifty years, a dragon, who had been robbed of his treasure which he had guarded three hundred years, came from the hill and burned men and houses with ‘waves of fire.’ Ordering for himself a variegated shield, all of iron, he goes to battle with ‘the foul, insidious stranger,’ in a cavern ‘under the earth, nigh to the sea wave,’ full within of embossed ornaments and wires; ‘too proud to seek the wide flier with a troop, with a large company’; yet sadly, as if with a presentiment that the end is near:

‘Firm rose the stone-wrought vault, a living stream
Burst from the barrow, red with ceaseless flame
That torrent glowed; nor lived there soul of man
Might tempt the dread abyss, nor feel its rage.
So watched the fire-drake o’er his hoard; — and now
Deep from his laboring breast the indignant Goth
Gave utterance to the war-cry. Loud and clear
Beneath the hoar stone rung the deafening sound,
And strife uprose: the watcher of the gold
Had marked the voice of man. First from his lair,
Shaking firm earth, and vomiting, as he strode,
A foul and fiery blast, the monster came.
Yet stood beneath the barrow’s lofty side
The Goth’s unshaken champion, and opposed
To that infuriate foe his full-orbed shield.
Then the good war-king bared his trenchant blade:
Tried was its edge of old, the stranger’s dread,
And keen to work the foul aggressor’s woe.

.
The kingly Goth
Reared high his hand, and smote the grisly foe;
But the dark steel upon the unyielding mail
Fell impotent, nor served its master’s need
Now at his utmost peril. Nor less that stroke
To maddening mood the barrow’s warden roused:
Outburst the flame of strife, and blaze of war
Beamed horribly; still no triumph won the Goth,
Still failed his keen brand in the unequal fray . . .

Again they met—again with freshened strength
 Forth from his breast the unconquered monster poured
 That pestilent breath. Encompassed by its flames,
 Sad jeopardy and new the chieftain held.'

With the assistance of a trusty comrade, he carves the worm in twain. Burning and faint with mortal wounds, he forgets himself in death, thinking only that his valor profits others; and says, grandly, the man breathing manifest beneath the hero:

'I have held this people fifty years; there was not any king of my neighbors, who dared to greet me with warriors, to oppress me with terror. . . . I held my own well, I sought not treacherous malice, nor swore unjustly many oaths; on account of all this, I, sick with mortal wounds, may have joy. . . . Now do thou go immediately to behold the hoard under the hoary stone, my dear Wiglaf. . . . Now, I have purchased with my death a hoard of treasures; it will be yet of advantage at the need of the people. . . . I give thanks . . . that I might before my dying day obtain such for my people . . . longer may I not here be.'

He dies, killed by the dragon's flame-breath, and is solemnly buried under a great barrow rising high above the deep blue waves:

'And round about the mound rode his hearth-sharers, who sang that he was of kings, of men, the mildest, kindest, to his people sweetest, and the readiest in search of praise.'

There —

'No sound of harp shall the warrior awake; but the dusky raven ready o'er the fallen shall speak many things,—to the eagle shall tell how he fared at his food while with the wolf he spoiled the slain.'

Here, under the light of poetry, through the mist of real events, transformed into legendary marvels, we see the actual life of Scandinavian English,—its pride, its melancholy, its reliance upon strength of arm, its practical spirit of adventure, its fatalism—'What is to be goes ever as it must'—tinged with the energetic sense that 'the Must-Be often helps an undoomed man when he is brave.' Thought is too impassioned for the details of comparison,—a characteristic of all Anglo-Saxon verse. In the six thousand and odd lines there are only five similes. Compare the Celtic fancy, with its love of ornament, as displayed in an average stanza on a Cymric chief who fell before the advancing Saxon:

'Both shoulders covered with his painted shield
 The hero there, swift as the war-horse, rushed.
 Noise in the mount of slaughter, noise and fire;
 The darting lances were as gleams of sun.
 There the glad raven fed. The foe must fly

While he so swept them as when in his course
 An eagle strikes the morning dew aside,
 And like a wheeling billow struck their front.
 Brave men, so say the bards, are dumb to slaves.
 Spears wasted men, and ere the swan-white steeds
 Trod the still grave that hushed the master voice,
 His blood washed all his arms. Such was Buddvan,
 Son of Bleedvan the Bold.'

A vehement phrase, without connectives, without order, with no ornament but three words beginning alike, an exclamation, a cry, a glowing image,—such is the style of the Saxon poets. Joy and fury neglect art. When passion bellows, ideas are crowded and clashed. See it all in the battle-song of *The Fight at Finsburg*:

'The army goes forth: the birds sing, the cricket chirps, the war-weapons sound, the lance clangs against the shield. Now shineth the moon, wandering under the sky. Now arise deeds of woe, which the enmity of this people prepares to do. . . . Then in the court came the tumult of war-earnage. . . . The raven whirled about, dark and sombre, like a willow leaf. There was a sparkling of blades, as if all Finsburg were on fire. Never have I heard of a more worthy battle in war.'

From the introduction of Christianity, the predominant tone of Saxon poetry is religious. But its voice, if less savage, is otherwise unchanged. Still its soul is tragic; its tones passionate and lightning-like. It is the old heart in transition,—yet a strong barbarous heart. If it essays a Bible narrative, as in the tragedy of *Judith*, we may see the pagan flesh and blood in the tumult, murder, vengeance, and combat of the verses. Holofernes gives a feast:

'All his fierce chiefs, bold mail-clad warriors, went at the feast to sit, eager to drink wine. There were often carried the deep bowls behind the benches; so likewise vessels and orcas full to those sitting at supper. . . . Then was Holofernes rejoiced with wine; in the halls of his guests he laughed and shouted, he roared and dimmed. Afar off might the stern one be heard to storm and clamor. . . . So was the wicked one—the lord and his men—drunk with wine, . . . till that they swimming lay . . . as they were death-slain.'

The night having arrived he falls drunk on his bed. The moment is come for Judith, 'the maid of the Creator, the holy woman,' to deliver Israel:

'She took the heathen man fast by his hair; she drew him by his limbs toward her disgracefully; and the mischief-full, odious man, at her pleasure laid, so as the wretch she might the easiest well command. She with the twisted locks struck the hateful enemy, meditating hate, with the red sword, till she had half cut off his neck; so that he lay in a swoon, drunk and mortally wounded. He was not then dead,—not entirely lifeless; earnest then she struck another time the heathen hound—she the woman

illustrious in strength—till that his head rolled forth upon the floor. Coffinless lay the foul one; downward turned his spirit under the abyss, and there was plunged below with sulphur fastened; forever afterward wounded by worms. In torments bound—hard imprisoned—he burns in hell. After his course he need not hope that he may escape from that mansion of worms, with darkness overwhelmed; but there he shall remain ever and ever—without end—henceforth void of the joys of hope, in that cavern home.'

Judith, returning to the city with the head of this wicked one, is met by the people, and the warrior instinct swells into flame, as she exhorts them to battle:

'Men under helms (went out) from the holy city at the dawn itself. They dinned shields; men roared loudly. At this rejoiced the lank wolf in the wood, and the wan raven, the fowl greedy of slaughter, both from the west, that the sons of men for them should have thought to prepare their fill on corpses. And to them flew in their paths the active devourer, the eagle, hoary in his feathers. The willowed kite, with his horned beak, sang the song of Hilda. The noble warriors proceeded, they in mail, to the battle, furnished with shields, with swelling banners.'

Men of any high mental power must be serious, whether in ancient or modern days. Only consider the reflective mood, the intense seriousness of this Saxon poetry. The *Hydriotaphia* of Browne and the *Thanatopsis* of Bryant are here in the bud. There is no passing by on the other side; but down to its uttermost depth, to its most appalling detail, it strives, like the Greek, to sound the secrets of sorrow. If any hope, relief, or triumph may hereafter seem possible,—well; but if not, still hopeless, reliefless, eternal, the sorrow shall be met face to face. This Northern imagination, which compared life to the flight of a bird,—in at one door and out at another, whence it came and whither it went being equally unknown to the lookers-on, now contemplates the stern agony of the 'breathless darkness' in a poem called *The Grave*, sad and grand like the life of man.

'For thee was a house built ere thou wert born; for thee a mould shapen ere thou of thy mother camest. Its height is not determined, nor is its depth measured; nor is it closed up (however long it may be), until I thee bring where thou shalt remain; until I shall measure thee and the sod of the earth. Thy house is not highly built: it is unhigh and low. When thou art in it, the heel-ways are low, the side-ways unhigh. The roof is built thy breast full nigh: so thou shalt in earth dwell full cold, dim, and dark. Doorless is that house, and dark is it within. There thou art fast detained, and Death holds the key. Loathly is that earth-house, and grim to dwell in. There thou shalt dwell, and worms shall share thee. Thus thou art laid, and leavest thy friends. Thou hast no friend that will come to thee, who will ever inquire how that house liketh thee, who shall ever open for thee the door, and seek thee, for soon thou becomest loathly and hateful to look upon.'

To this people, which has forgotten the halls of Valhalla, to which danger is a delight, which loves gloomy pictures, the

shadowy is a fascination, as to the Hindoo, the Egyptian and the Greek. *The Soul's Complaint of the Body* suggests the underworld rivers and the wandering hapless ghosts of Greek and Roman mythology:

'Befits it well that man should deeply weigh
His soul's last journey; how he then may fare
When death comes on him, and breaks short in twain
The bond that held his flesh and spirit linked:
Long is it thence ere at the hands of Heaven
The spirit shall reap joy or punishment,
E'en as she did in this her earthly frame.
For ere the seventh night of death hath past,
Ghastly and shrieking shall that spirit come,—
The soul to find its body. Restless thus
(Unless high Heaven first work the end of all things)
A hundred years thrice told the shade shall roam.'

So Virgil represents the souls of the unburied haunting the banks of the Styx, sad and tombless, vainly entreating in pathetic supplication the dread Charon to ferry them over:

'There stood the first and prayed him hard to waft their bodies o'er,
With hands stretched out for niter love of that far-lying shore;
But that grim sailor now takes these, now those, from out the band,
While all the others far away he thrusteth from the sand.' . . .

For—

'Those borne across the wave
Are buried: none may ever cross the awful roaring road
Until their bones are laid at rest within their last abode.
An hundred years they stray about and wander round the shore,
Then they at last have grace to gain the pools desired so sore.'

All who know what pathos there is in the memory of faces that have vanished, of joys that have faded, of days gone by,—holy as spots of earth where angel-feet have stepped, will appreciate the rare poetical power of the mutilated poem of *The Ruin*:

'Wondrous is this wall-stone, the fates have broken it—have burst the burgh-place. Perishes the work of giants; fallen are the roofs, the towers tottering—the hoar gate-towers despoiled—rime on the lime—*hrim on lime*; shattered are the battlements, riven, fallen under the Eotnish race; the earth-grave has its powerful workmen; decayed, departed, the hard of gripe are fallen and passed away to a hundred generations of people. . . . Bright were the burgh-dwellings, many its princely halls, high its steepled splendor; there was martial sound great, many a mead-hall full of human joys, until obdurate fate changed it all; they perished in wide slaughter. . . . There many a chief of old, joyous and gold-bright, splendidly decorated, proud, and with wine elate, in warlike decorations shone; looked on treasures, on silver, on curious gems, on luxnry, on wealth, on precious stone, on this bright burgh of a broad realm.'

Among the unknown poets, there is one, **Cædmon**, whose vigor and grandeur will presently be the subject of special consideration. Meanwhile, that which is sown is not quickened

except it die. The decay of an old literature is the antecedent condition for a new mode of intellectual life. This old poetic genius of sublimity and fury, waning before the Conquest, disappears after it, to emerge once more when the wounds have closed and the saps have mingled. Till then, the current that flows shallow and fantastic above ground is of French origin.

What was this new literature, by which a broader spreading and a more generous vine should spring from the regenerated root of the old stock? Romantic fiction.

Its origin.—The child personifies the stone that hurts him, and his first impulse is to resent the injury as if he imagined it to be endowed with consciousness and to be acting with design. The childhood of superstition personifies each individual existence,—the plant and the rock. The childhood of philosophy personifies the universe. The barbarian is fascinated by the incomprehensible. Unable to assign, for a natural phenomenon, a cause within nature, he has recourse to a living personality enshrined in it. To every grotto he gives a genius; to every tree, river, spring, a divinity. Out of the darkness he cannot tell what alarming spectre may emerge. Everywhere he is a believer in sorcery, witchcraft, enchantments. In an advanced stage of development, he conceives a number of personal beings distinct from the material creation, which preside over the different provinces of nature,—the sea, the air, the winds, the streams, the heavens, and assume the guardianship of individuals, tribes, and nations. Remembering this tendency for personification which marks the early life of man, his necessity of referring effects to their causes, and his interpretation of things according to outward appearances, we shall better understand how the Hours, the Dawn, and the Night, with her black mantle bespangled with stars, came to receive their forms; how the clouds were sacred cattle driven to their milking, or sheep of the golden fleece; how the fall of the dew was the shedding of divine tears, and the fatal sun-shafts the arrows of Apollo shot from his golden bow; how the west, where the sun and stars go down, was the portal of descent to hell, and the morning twilight a reflection from the Elysian Fields; how the eruptions of the volcano were due to the throes of the agonized giant, vainly struggling to rise; how earthquakes, famine, hail, snow, and tempests were the work of supernatural

fiends; how the traditions of every land are replete with the exploits of gods, magicians, and devils. Further, under the operation of this principle, a similarity of imagery will exist wherever there exists a resemblance in the objects calling it forth; and a multitude of the symbols thus brought into circulation will be found recurring, like the primitive roots of a language, in almost every country, as common property inherited by descent. Thus, a mound of earth becomes the sepulchre of a favorite hero; a pile of enormous stones, the labor of a giant; a single one, the stupendous instrument of daily exercise to a fabled king; the figure of a rock, proof of some deity's wrath or presence,—the foot-print of Hercules or the weeping Niobe: every one, of Aryan blood, knows that the moon is inhabited by a man with a bundle of sticks on his back, exiled thither many centuries, and so far away that he is beyond the reach of death; from the remotest period, the rod has been employed in divination; in Bohemia, in Scotland, in Switzerland, in Iceland, in North America, is the story of some Rip Van Winkle who slumbers while years or ages glide by like a watch in the night; and of that great mystery of human life which is an enigma never solved, and ever originating speculation, is born the myth of the Wandering Jew. Consider, again, how incidents change by distance, and we by age. How a thing grows in memory when love or hate is there to idealize it! The philosophic Agis had to console his desponding countrymen with a remark which every man's experience has made familiar,—that 'the fading virtues of later times were a cause of grief to his father, who in turn had listened to the same regrets from his own venerable sire.' Washington, whose picture even now transcends the fact, would be a *myth*, had there been no books. In the days of Alfred, golden bracelets hung untouched in the open road. In the native vigor of the youthful world, a thousand years are given to the life of man. The national hero, through the lengthened vista, acquires a gigantic stature. The body of Orestes when found measured seven cubits, and the sandals of Perseus two. How prismatic must be the imagination, when the national mind, as here, is yet in the fresh young radiance of hope and wonder, as of the young child's thoughts in the wild lion-hearts of men. Time is a *camera obscura*, through which a man, if great while living, becomes ten-fold greater when

dead. Henceforward he exists to society by some shining trait of beauty or utility which he had; and, borrowing his proportions from the one fine feature, we finish the portrait symmetrically. That feature is the small real star that gleams out of the dark vortex of the ages through the madness of rioting fancy and the whirlwind-chaos of images, expanding, according to the glass it shines through, into wondrous thousand-fold form and color.

Such is the foundation of fiction in general; originating as a whole from no single point as to country or to time, but in part springing from common organic causes, and in part travelling from region to region, on airy wing scattering the seeds of its wild flowers imperceptibly over the world, from the gorgeous East to the virgin West and the frozen North. Its radical types, much as the root-words of speech, are amplified and compounded to meet the demands of new occasions, transferred from one subject to another, and embellished according to the taste, temper, and resources of the artist. Thus, the Macedonian conqueror and his contemporaries are accoutred in the garb of feudalism, and his wars transformed into chivalrous adventures. The Naiads of Greece differ only in name from the Nixen of Germany, and the Norwegian Thor is brother to Olympian Jove. The Persian Goblet of the Sun reappears as the horn of the Celtic Bran, producing whatever liquor is called for; or as the Saint Graal, of the Round Table,—for which is reserved the ‘Seat Perilous,’—the miraculous cup, the giver of sumptuous banquets, the healer of maladies, to the pure the interpreter of the will of Heaven. The magic ship of Odin, which could be folded like a handkerchief, becomes, under the play of Homeric fancy, self-directing and prophetic:

‘So shalt thou instant reach the realm assign’d,
In wondrous ships, self-moved, instinct with mind:
No helm secures their course, no pilot guides;
Like men intelligent, they plough the tides,
Conscious of every coast and every bay
That lies beneath the sun’s alluring ray.’

The story of Jack and Jill is a venerable one in Icelandic mythology, and Jack and the Beanstalk has found eager listeners in Africa, as in every quarter of Europe. All the machinery of the Iliad is reproduced in the legend of Charlemagne, and if in his case myth were not controlled and rectified by history, he would

be for us, under his adventitious ornaments, as unreal as Agamemnon. Thus the popular literature of the Middle Ages, indigenous and imported, fostered by a like credulity, vision, and mystery, was invested with the same tissue of marvels,—personified and supernatural agents, heroes, elves, fairies, dwarfs, giants, enchanters, spells, charms, and amulets. Written in the Romance dialects—principally in French and Italian—tales of dimly remembered kings, of marvellous agency and gallant daring, are hence designated as **Romances**; and differ from the similar productions of antiquity chiefly in a change of names and places, with an admixture of the refinement and pageantry of feudal religion and manners.

Its themes.—During a long period, saintly legends, in which self-torture was the chief measure of excellence, formed the guiding ideals of Christendom; and the first romances were little more than legends of devotion, containing the pilgrimage of an old warrior. As chivalry grew in splendor and fascination, martial exploits were added to his youth, his religious shaded into the heroic character, and the penitent was lost in the knight-errant. Penance, which was the governing image of the one, gradually became the remote sequel of the other, till it was almost an established rule of romance for the knight to end his days in a hermitage. By the reactionary influence of worship, valor was consecrated, and a Christian soul gave tone and coloring to the whole body of romantic fiction. Thus the Holy Graal, in the midst of the bright animal life of the Arthur legends, became a type of the mystery of Godliness. Whatever impure man sat in the Seat Perilous the earth swallowed. When men became sinful, it, visible only to pure eyes, disappeared; and in the quest for it, only the spotless Sir Galahad succeeded.

A general homage to the fair, independent of personal attachment, forms a distinguishing and most important element of mediæval romance. This also, in its best development, was the offspring of the Christian dispensation. True, as we have seen, its rudiments already existed in the deference paid to the female sex by the Teutons, who believed some divine quality to be inherent in their women. Thus Tacitus relates that Velleda, a German prophetess, held frequent conferences with the Roman generals; and on some occasions, on account of the sacredness of her person,

was placed at a great distance on a high tower, whence, as an oracle, she conveyed her answers by a chosen messenger. But that rapturous adoration of woman which produced the spirit of gallantry was the inevitable result of the new ideal introduced by Christianity, which, over the qualities of strength, courage, self-reliance, and patriotism, enthroned the gentler virtues of meekness, patience, humility, faith, and love. This was no other than change from a type essentially masculine to one which was essentially feminine. The Virgin Mary was exalted by the Church to a central figure of devotion, and in her elevation, woman, from being associated with ideas of degradation and of sensuality, rose into a new sphere, and became the object of a reverential regard unknown to the proudest civilizations of the past. Love was idealized. The moral charm of female excellence was felt. Into a harsh and benighted age were infused a conception of gentleness and of purity, a sense of delicacy and elegance, around which clustered all that was best in Europe. Chivalry took systematic shape as the adventurous service of God and womankind. The Crusades were its first outgrowth in action, and love-poetry its first symmetrical expression in art. Valor was exerted to protect the innocent from violence, to succor the distressed, to release captive beauty from embattled walls. The knight, fond dreamer whom the dream forever fled, turned him to far lands and conflicts, to merit and win the favor of his fair adored, whose point of honor it was to be chaste and inaccessible.¹

But loving chivalry for its nobleness, let us not be blind to its folly and excess. To a bitter winter's day it gave the tint of amethyst. Over the darkness it threw a cheering light. Its incentives, exalted and sublime as they were, too often in this unripe civilization made its possessors implacable and infuriate. The feudal hero did less than he imagined. His profession of courtesy and courage was not infrequently the brilliant disguise that concealed tyranny and rapine. A reduction and softening-down of a rough and lawless period, it often rose to fanaticism or

¹ This respectful enthusiasm for woman forms one of the most remarkable facts in the intellectual development of Europe. Warton derives it from Teutonic manners; Hallam, from the secular institutions of Rome and the gay idleness of the nobility. A profounder philosophy must have shown them that more influential than any of these causes, or all combined, were the prominence given by Christianity to the female virtues, woman's conspicuous position in the conversion of the Empire by reason of the better adaptation of her genius to piety, the elevation of the Virgin, and the consequent change from an ideal type especially masculine to one especially feminine.

sunk into gross impurity. From the middle of the twelfth until the end of the fourteenth century, it had its Courts of Love, which, sanctioning much that the courts of law forbade, instituted obligations antagonistic to the duties of domestic life. Here love-verses were sung, love-causes were heard, and judgments rendered with formal citations of precedents. They had a code, said to have been established by the king of love, and found by a Breton cavalier and lover in Arthur's court, tied to the foot of a falcon. Its first rule was that marriage does not excuse from love, and the ladies' courts enacted that love and marriage are things wholly asunder. Thus, A seeks from a lady permission to love, and is told that she already has a lover, B, but willingly will take A when B is lost. She marries B, and immediately, in fulfilment of promise, A claims his right to be her lover. She wishes to withdraw, but is sued, and the court decides for the plaintiff, saying:

'We do not venture to contradict the decision of the Countess of Champagne, who, by a solemn judgment, has pronounced that true love cannot exist between those who are married to each other.'¹

The central figures of romance were Arthur² and the Knights of the Round Table, Charlemagne and his Peers, the heroes³ of the Crusades, and the Anglo-Danish Cycle, the most famous of which were, Havelock, King Horn, and Guy of Warwick.⁴

A series of fictions destined to operate powerfully on the general body of our old poetry, was a Latin compilation entitled *Gesta Romanorum*, or *Deeds of the Romans*, whose stories, saintly, chivalrous, or allegorical, of home-growth or transplanted from the East, were often used by the clergy to rouse the indifference and relieve the languor of their rude and simple hearers. It is a characteristic expression of the manners and sentiments of the time. Thus,—

'*Chap. LXIII.*—The garden of Vespasian's daughter. All her lovers are obliged to enter this garden before they can obtain her love, but none returns alive. The garden is haunted by a lion, and has only one entrance which divides into so many windings

¹ The Love-Courts, so far from being a jest or idle amusement, as Morley understands them, were one of the moral and social phenomena of the time, springing from the prolonged barbarity of the fœdal marriage-tie. The lady-love, almost always of high rank, frequently an heiress in her own right, was sure to be disposed of for prudential or political reasons before she had any choice in the matter; and the sufferings to which women were exposed as wives, explain to a certain extent the adoration which they exacted and obtained as the ladies of the chevaliers.

² See Tennyson's *Idyls of the King*, in which these characters are splendidly portrayed.

³ Richard Cœur de Lion, for example, one of the most celebrated.

⁴ See Sir Walter Scott.

that it never can be found again. At length, she furnishes a knight with a ball or clue of thread, and teaches him how to foil the lion. Having achieved this adventure, he marries the lady.'

'*Chap. LXVI.*—A knight offers to recover a lady's inheritance, which had been seized by a tyrant, on condition, that if he is slain, she shall always keep his bloody armour hanging in her chamber. He regains her property, although he dies in the attempt; and as often as she was afterwards sued for in marriage, before she gave an answer, she returned to her chamber, and contemplating with tears her deliverer's bloody armour, resolutely rejected every solicitation.'

'*Chap. CLX.*—[Best illustrated by a like story of the Boy, in Boccaccio's *Decameron*.] A king had an only son. As soon as he was born, the physicians declared that if he was allowed to see the sun or any fire before he arrived at the age of twelve years, he would be blind. The king commanded an apartment to be hewed within a rock, into which no light could enter; and here he shut up the boy, totally in the dark, yet with proper attendants, for twelve years. At the end of which time, he brought him abroad from his gloomy chamber, and placed in his view men, women, gold, precious stones, rich garments, chariots of exquisite workmanship drawn by horses with golden bridles, heaps of purple tapestry, armed knights on horseback, oxen and sheep. These were all distinctly pointed out to the youth: but being most pleased with the women, he desired to know by what name they were called. An esquire of the king jocosely told him that they were devils who catch men. Being brought to the king, he was asked which he liked best of all the fine things he had seen. He replied, "The devils who catch men."'

'*Chap. CXX.*—King Darius's legacy to his three sons. To the eldest he bequeaths all his paternal inheritance: to the second, all that he had acquired by conquest: and to the third, a ring and necklace, both of gold, and a rich cloth. All the three last gifts were endowed with magical virtues. Whoever wore the ring on his finger, gained the love or favor of all whom he desired to please. Whoever hung the necklace over his breast, obtained all his heart could desire. Whoever sate down on the cloth, could be instantly transported to any part of the world which he chose.'

Not unlike the lighter stories of the *Gesta* were the *fabliaux*, short familiar pictures of society, keyed to minor occasions, usually satirical, and levelling their wit most frequently at the ladies.

Its form.—The versification of Latin, it is well known, was based upon syllabic quantity, which acknowledged among verse-sounds but two possible time-values—the long and the short, of which the former was strictly to the latter as two to one. The ratio, moreover, was *fixed*, so that a long syllable was always long, and a short one always short. The bar or foot was signalized by the rhythmic accent; as—

'Árma virúmque canó, Trojáe qui prímus ab óris:'

but this was scarcely the accentuation of prose or familiar utterance,—a difference which every one may see illustrated in Shakespeare, if first the passage be supposed to conform to the typic scheme. Thus—

'This my mean task
Would be as heavy to me as odions; but
The mistress which I serve quickens what's dead.'

Of course, it would be absurd to read, in the manner of current discourse: 'This mý mean task would be as heavy to me as odious; büt the mistress which I serve quickéns what's dead.' The distinction of 'longs' and 'shorts,' never attended to by the uninstructed, required study to attain it, even while Latin remained a living tongue. Just as the people corrupted and mutilated the classic speech founding a new upon the ruins of the old,—so, under the shadow of this cultured poesy, which moved with the regularity of changeless fate, there sprang up, away in the provinces and among the ignorant everywhere, an humble growth of popular song which knew nothing of artificial quantities and arbitrary cæsuras, but was simply—and often rudely—rhymed and accented more nearly after the style of actual speech; and when the foreign graces of Roman letters perished with the Empire, this lowly, indigenous poetry escaped by its insignificance, and began to increase. Related to the former, as a dialect to its parent, it imitated the ancient syllabic arrangement. Thus the spirited trochaic (- ∪) and iambic (∪ -) measures were common in the rhyming chants of the early Church. The *Song of Aldhelm* shows us an Anglo-Saxon poet, at the beginning of the eighth century, versifying Latin words in the metre of the *Raven*:

'Ónce upón a mídnight dréary
Léctor cáste cátholíce

Whíle I póndered weák and wéary.'
Atque óbses áthletíce.

'Lector caste catholice
Atque obses athleticæ
Tnis pulsatus precibus
Obnixæ flagitantibus

Usque diram Dornoniam
Per carentum Cornubiam
Florulentis cespitibus
Et fœcundis graminibus.'

This, then, was the poetic form which began, in the eleventh century, to give expression to the romantic sentiments, the warlike genius of France,—a form in which the quantity of the verse-sounds was variable, the same word or syllable doing the duty of a 'long' or a 'short,' according to its position among neighboring sounds; a form, too, in which the bar or root was more especially signalized to the ear, as at present, by the stress of current utterance, coinciding with the rhythmic accent, and having its origin in the logical preëminence of the root-syllable over the other sounds in a word;—a form whose beat, revealing

the peculiar genius of those who adopted it, was less the pulse of march-time than the free and airy swing of a waltz. Themes were, indeed, supplied from all quarters; but the romance-setting which was common to them all, and which won the heart and imagination of Europe, was French. It was this that constituted for the French literature and language, at the height of the Middle Age, a clear predominance.

Its poets.—Of this literature there were two divisions, corresponding to the two dialects of France,—the *Langue D' Oc* and the *Langue D' Oyl*, so named from the words for *yes*, which were *oc* in the South and *oyl* in the North. The first, or Provençal, is irrecoverably dead; the second, or Norman, is unalterably established as the French tongue. The poets of the former were called *Troubadours*; of the latter, *Trouvères*, which are evidently dialectic forms of the same word, meaning *inventors*. From the middle of the twelfth century, the troubadours were numerous as the gay insects of spring, till the close of the thirteenth, when they came to an end,—a lispings, brilliant, short-lived school of song. Their poetry was chiefly lyric, and its chief inspiration was love. Each selects the fair object of his melodious homage, flings himself, body and soul, into love's thrall, exults or wails, mopes and dreams, sighs, faints, and falls, rises and sings, while the April air, the nightingale, and the dewy dawn dilate his joy by accord or intensify his agony by contrast:

'Such is now my glad elation,
All things change their seeming;
All with flowers, white, blue, carnation,
Hoary frosts are teeming;
Storm and flood but make occasion
For my happy scheming;
Welcome is my song's oblation,
Praise outruns my dreaming.
Oh, ay! this heart of mine
Owns a rapture so divine,
Winter doth in blossoms shine,
Snow with verdure gleaming!

When my love was from me riven,
Steadfast faith upbore me;
She for whom I so have striven
Seems to hover o'er me;
All the joys that she hath given
Memory can restore me;

All the days I saw her, even
Gladden evermore me.
Ah, yes! I love in bliss;
All my being tends to this;
Yea, although her sight I miss,
And in France deplore me.

Yet if like a swallow flying
I might come unto thee,
Come by night where thou art lying,
Verily I'd sue thee,
Dear and happy lady, crying,
I must die or woo thee,
Though my soul dissolve in sighing
And my fears undo me.
Evermore thy grace of yore
I with folded hands adore,
On thy glorious colors pore,
Till despair goes through me.'

This style early extended itself to the Northern dialect. Abelard, poet and philosopher, was the first of recorded name who taught the banks of the Seine to resound a tale of love. Says the gifted and noble Eloise, of whom he sung:

‘You composed many verses in amorous measure, so sweet both in their language and in their melody, that your name was incessantly in the mouths of all; and even the most illiterate could not be forgetful of you. This it was chiefly that made women admire you; and, as most of these songs were on me and my love, they made me known in many countries, and caused many women to envy me. Every tongue spoke of your Eloise; every street, every house, resounded with my name.’

The poetry of the North, however, was mostly epic, with historical and romantic themes; written for the luxurious few, ambitious and astir with action; expressing and circulating the chivalrous sentiments of life, of love, and of loyalty. The *trouvères*—minstrel-poets—were the idealizing spirits of the knight, who in hours of leisure and festivity rehearsed his exploits, in transfigured and poetic form, to his flattered and delighted senses, holding before him a magic mirror in which he saw with what nobleness and enchantment he was invested. No wonder that they were caressed and richly rewarded,—first in France, where they were native; then in England, where they were transplanted.

Such, then, was the literature at this time domiciled across the Channel,—a literature into which were gathered the delicate fancies of the Celtic poems, the grand ruins of the German epics, the marvellous splendors of the conquered East, with the whole medley of imaginary creatures;—a poetry of mailed knights and radiant ladies, of polite and witty love, of vague reveries and elegant visions;—a poetry whose facile ideas, expounded and repeated *ad infinitum*, flow through interminable and insipid rhymes with the careless grace of a clear and purling brook. Bent on pleasure, brilliant but shallow, it will die,—die for lack of depth and perspective. Society itself must purge or perish when it becomes operatic. But first it will become the leaven which throws into fermentation the now torpid elements of the Anglo-Saxon character, secretly and silently training and costuming the *dramatis personæ* for a new and nobler entry upon the literary stage. Form will inherit its refinement, its grace, its music; thought, its piquancy, order, and transparency. Its heaped-up tales, incoherent and mutilated, which in the weak

hands of the trouvères lie like rubbish or rough-hewn stones, Chaucer and, above all, Spenser will build into a monument.

Meanwhile, ideas are imported. The Normans, incapable of great poetry, continue to copy, arrange, and develop, with their eyes glued to a series of exaggerated and colored images. Even the English become rhymesters in French. Several write the first half of the verse in English and the second in French,—as if French influence were at once moulding and oppressing them! A few employ the vernacular, garnish sermons or histories with rhymes, and call them poems. All are imitative and mediocre, repeating what they imitate, with fewer merits and greater faults. Translations, copies, imitations,—there is little or nothing else. First of the new singers is **Layamon**, a monk, who in 1205 translates into verse and amplifies the *Brut*, a subject supplied him from a four-fold source,—the supposed original Celtic poem, which is lost; the Latin chronicle of Geoffrey; the dull-rhymed rhapsody of Gaimar; and the duller paraphrase of Wace. Through its more than thirty-two thousand lines the babble goes on, in irregular verse, sometimes rhymed, oftener alliterative, mixing both systems, and employing either at convenience; in general adhering, by its rhythm and short quick phrases, to the fashion of the ancient Saxons, without their fire; never rising to interest but by virtue of the theme, as in the account of Arthur's nativity:

'The time cō the wes icoren,
tha wes Arthur iboren.
Sone swa he com an eorthe,
aluen hine inengen.
heo bigolen that child
mid galdere swithe stronge;
heo genē him mihte
to beon bezst alre cnihten.
heo geuen him an other thing,

that he scolde beon riche king.
heo ginen hī that thridde,
that he scolde longe libben.
heo gifen him that kine-bern
custen swithe gode,
that he wes mete-custi
of alle quikemonnen;
this the alne him gef,
and al swa that child iſthæh.'¹

Or, again, where Arthur, dying of fifteen 'dreadful wounds,' into the least of which 'one might thrust two gloves,' is transported after death in a boat, by fairy elves, to Avalon, the abode of their queen:

¹ The time came that was chosen, then was Arthur born. So soon as he came on earth, elves took him; they enchanted the child with magic most strong, they gave him might to be the best of all knights; they gave him another thing, that he should be a rich king; they gave him the third, that he should live long; they gave to him the prince virtues most good, so that he was most generous of all men alive. This the elves gave him, and thus the child thrived.

‘Arthur was wounded wondrously much. There came to him a lad, who was of his kindred; he was Cadur’s son the earl of Cornwall; . . . Arthur looked on him, where he lay on the ground, and said these words, with sorrowful heart: “Constantine, thou art welcome; thou wert Cadur’s son. I give thee here my kingdom, and defend thou my Britons ever in thy life, and maintain them all the laws that have stood in my days, and all the good laws that in Uther’s days stood. And I will fare to Avalun, to the fairest of all maidens, to Argante the queen, an elf most fair, and she shall make my wounds all sound; make me all whole with healing draughts. And afterwards I will come to my kingdom, and dwell with the Britons with mickle joy.” Even with the words there approached from the sea that was a short boat, floating with the waves; and two women therein, wondrously formed; and they took Arthur anon, and bare him quickly, and laid him softly down, and forth they gan depart. Then was it accomplished that Merlin whilom said, that mickle care should be of Arthur’s departure. The Britons believe yet that he is alive, and dwelleth in Avalun with the fairest of all elves; and the Britons ever yet expect when Arthur shall return. Was never the man born, of ever any lady chosen, that knoweth of the sooth, to say more of Arthur. But whilom was a sage hight Merlin: he said with words,—his sayings were sooth,—that an Arthur should yet come to help the English (Britons).’

Another poem, of later date, 1250, with no merit but that of just design and regular versification, is the *Ormulum*, by **Orm**, also a monk. Its plan is to explain to the people the spiritual import of the daily Service. A religious hand-book, simple and rustic, it marks the rise of English religious literature. The ideal monk is to be ‘a very pure man, and altogether without property, except that he shall be found in simple meat and clothes.’ He will have ‘a hard and stiff and rough and heavy life to lead. All his heart and desire ought to be aye toward Heaven, and his Master well to serve.’ This, as we have seen, was the popular religion. In pardonable vanity the author says:

‘Thiss boc iss nemmedd Ormmulm
Forthi thatt Orm itt wrohhte.’

Another poem—for we must call it such, if phrases ending with the same sound are poetry—is the chronicle of **Robert of Gloucester**, written in Alexandrines¹ about the year 1300, and deserving notice chiefly as the most ancient professed history in the English language. Beginning with the siege of Troy, it ends with the death of Henry III, 1272. It conveys some information of value upon the social and physical condition of England in the thirteenth century, as the following lines suggest:

‘From South to North he ys long eigte hondred myle:
And foure hondred myle brod from Est to West to wende,
A mydde tho lond as yt be, and nogt as by the on ende.
Plente me may in Engeland of alle gode y se,

¹ Verses of twelve syllables, or six iambic feet. The *Alexandrine*, as the designation of a particular metre, took its name from its employment in the popular and widely circulated poems on Alexander the Great.

Bute fole yt for gulte other yeres the worse be.
 For Engelond ys full ynow of fruyt and of tren,
 Of wodes and of parkes, that ioie yt ys to sen.
 Of foules and of bestes of wyld and tame al so,
 Of salt fysch and eche fresch, and sayre ryneres ther to.
 Of welles swete and colde ynow, of lesen and of mede. [pastures
 Of seluer and of gold, of tyn and of lede.
 Of stel, of yrn and of bras, of god corn gret won.
 Of whyte and of wolle god, betere ne may be non.
 Wateres he hath eke gode y now, ac at be fore alle other thre [but
 Out of the lond in to the see, armes as thei be.
 Ware by the schippes mowe come fro the se and wende,
 And brynge on lond god y now, a bonte in eche ende.'

But shall we look upon a desert of stumps, and exclaim, 'O my soul, what beauty!' What is here in these metrical Lives of Saints, rhymed dissertations and chronicles, which are so well prolonged and so void of pleasure? What but poverty of intellect and taste? Wholly destitute of poetical merit, unable to develop a continuous idea, they disregard historical truth without securing the graces of fable by the sacrifice. They are, it is true, of interest to the lover of antiquities, and of importance to the linguist, as are fossil remains to the geologist. They exhibit the physiology of the English speech in its transition or larva and chrysalis states. Thus the *Brut*, though rendered from the French, contains fewer than fifty Norman words. A remarkable peculiarity of its grammar is the use of the pronoun *his* as a sign of the possessive case, as when in more modern English it was not unusual to write *John his book*. The *Ormulum* differs from the Anglo-Saxon models in wanting alliteration, and from the Norman-French in wanting rhyme. It contains a few words from the ecclesiastical Latin, but scarcely a trace of Norman influence. It has a peculiar device of spelling, consistent and uniform,—the doubling of the consonant after every short vowel,—to indicate what, at a period of great confusion, the author deemed the standard pronunciation. Its immediate purpose, perhaps, was to guide the half-Normanized priests when the verses were read aloud for the good or pleasure of the people. On adherence to its orthography by readers and copyists, it lays great stress:

'And whase willen shall this booke
 Eft other siþe writen,
 Him bidde icc that he't write right
 Swa sum this booke him teacheth.'

And whoso shall wish this book
 After other time to write,
 Him bid I that he it write right,
 So as this book him teacheth.

In Robert's *Chronicle of England*, the infusion of Norman words is still not more than four or five per cent, while it represents the language in a decidedly more advanced stage. He distinctly states the prevalence of French in his own day:

'Vor bote a man couthe French, me tolth of him well lute
For unless a man know French, one talketh of him little;
 Ac lowe men holdeth to Englyss, and to her kunde speche zute
But low men hold to English, and to their natural speech yet.'

Let us omit *The Lay of Havelok the Dane*, an orphan who marries an English princess; *King Horn*, who, thrown into a boat when a lad, is wrecked upon the coast of England, and, becoming a knight, reconquers the kingdom of his father; *Sir Guy*, who rescues enchanted knights, cuts down a giant, challenges and kills the Sultan in his tent; *Alexander*, the great hero of the heathen world, whose forgotten glory, after the downfall of the Empire, was revived on the Levantine shores of the Mediterranean, and then in Western Europe;—all which are of the thirteenth century, and restored or adapted from the French; all which, while they serve to illustrate the continuity of the English tongue, the growth of the French romantic manner of story-telling as the years grow nearer to 1300, and the demand of the Middle Age for glare and startling events, are utterly without power in delineating character or unity of conception in plan and execution.

In the midst of the story-tellers are satirists who, writing mostly in French or Latin, censure political abuses and Church corruptions, sometimes in a tone of mournful seriousness, as if the degradation to which the profession was reduced by the depravity of the higher clergy was deeply felt; sometimes with more force than respect or elegance. Thus an English poem of the *Land of Cockaigne*,—from *coquina*, a kitchen,—a form of satire current in many parts of Europe:

'List, for now my tale begins,	There the Pope for my offence,
How to rid me of my sins,	Bade me straight in penance, thence,
Once I journey'd far from home,	Wandering onward to attain
To the gate of holy Rome.	The wondrous land that hight Cockaigne.'

We are told of a region free from trouble, where the rivers run with oil, milk, wine, and honey; wherein the white and grey monks have an abbey of which the walls are built of pasties, which are paved with cakes, and have puddings for pinnacles.

Roasted geese fly about crying, 'Geese all hot'! This is the triumph of gluttony.

Here, also, like prophecies of the perfect bloom, are some bright lyrics,—religious, amatory, pastoral, warlike. The chivalric adoration of the sovereign Lady, the real deity of mediæval society, breathes in this pleasing hymn, which bears witness to its origin:

'Blessed beo thu, lavedi,	Al min hope is uppon the,
Ful of hoven blisse;	Bi day and bi night . . .
Sweet flur of parais,	Bricht and scene quen of storre,
Moder of milternisse . . .	So me liht and lere.
I-blessed beo thu, Lavedi,	In this false fikele world,
So fair and so briht;	So me led and steore.'

What could be farther from the Saxon sentiment? A poem of some interest as the earliest imaginative piece of native invention after the Conquest is *The Owl and the Nightingale*, in octosyllabic rhyme, composed in the reign of Henry III. It is a dispute between the two birds as to which has the finer voice. After much reciprocal abuse, the question of superiority is referred to the author.

Love of nature is deep and national. To the Frenchman it is a light gladness, soon gone, suggesting only a pleasing couplet as it passes,—'Now is winter gone, the hawthorn blossoms, the rose expands, the birds do voice their vows in melody.' To the Englishman, all sad and moral, the circling seasons suggest a spiritual lesson,—chiefly 'vanity of vanities.' So is the following, of the reign of Edward I, truly English in spirit:

'Wynter wakeneth al my care,
 Nou this leves waxeth bare,
 Ofte y sike ant mourne sare,
 When hit cometh in my thoht
 Of this worlde's joie, hou hit goth al to noht,

Now hit is, and now hit nys,
 Also hit nere y-wys,
 That moni mon seith soth his ys,
 Al goth bote Godes wille,
 Alle we shule deye, thath us like ylle.

Al that gren me graueth grene,
 Non hit faleweth al by-dene;
 Jhesu, help that hit be sene,
 And shild us from helle,
 For y not whider y shal, ne hou longe her duelle.'

Yeomen and harpers throw off some spirited products; but their songs, first ignored, then transformed, reach us only in a late

edition, as *Robin Hood*, *Chevy Chase*, and the *Nut-Brown Maid*.

Enough. The Saxon stock, stripped of its buds by the Norman axe, grows, though feebly. An occasional shoot displays genuine England to the light, as a vast rock crops up here and there from beneath the soil.

Prose.—When the preservation of literary compositions by writing has given opportunity for their patient study, the next step is possible,—the use of prose; and histories, rude and meagre, serving rather to fix a date than to illuminate it, are its principal products. Nature makes men poets,—art makes them philosophers and critics.

English prose looks fondly back to **Alfred**, in his translations of **Bede**, for its true parentage. As Whitby, in the person of Cædmon, is the cradle of English poetry, so Winchester is that of English prose. Failing soon after, it is revived in Ælfrie, who, turning into English the first seven books and part of Job, becomes the first large translator of the Bible; repressed by the Danes, and again by the Normans, it dies in the death of the *Saxon Chronicle*, nor lives again in any extended form till the reign of Edward III.

There may be mentioned a curious work in the vernacular, belonging to the latter part of the twelfth century,—the *Ancoren Riwele*, that is, the *Anchoresses' Rule*, a code of monastic precepts for the guidance of a small nunnery, or rather religious society of ladies:

'Ye ne schulen eten vleschs ne seim buten ine muclehe secnesse; other hwoso is euer feble eteth potage blietheliche; and wunieth on to lutel dranch. . . . Ye, mine leone sustren, ne schulen babben no best, bute kat one. . . . Nexst fleshe ne schal mon werien no linene cloth, bute yif hit beo of herde and of greate heorden. Stamin habbe hwose wule; and hwose wille mei beon buten. Ye schulen ligen in on heater, and i-gurd. . . . Ower schone beon greate and warme. Ine sumer ye habbeth leane norto gon and sitten barnot. . . . Ye ne schulen senden lettres, ne undernon lettres, ne writen, buten leane. Ye schulen beon i-dodded four sithen ithe yere, norto lihten ower heaned; and ase ofte i-leten blod; and oftene yif neod is; and hwoso mei beon ther withuten, ich hit mei wel i-tholien.'¹

¹ Ye shall not eat flesh nor lard but in much sickness; or whoso is ever feeble may eat potage blithely; and accustom yourselves to little drink. . . . Ye, my dear sisters, shall have but one cat. . . . Next the flesh ye shall wear no linen cloth, but if it be of hard and of coarse canvas. Whoso will may have a shirt of woolen and linen, and whoso will may be without. Ye shall lie in a garment and girt. . . . Let your shoes be large and warm. In summer ye are permitted to go and sit bare-foot. . . . Ye shall not send letters, nor receive letters, nor write without leave. Ye shall be cropped four times in the year, to lighten your head; and as often bled, oftener if need be; but whoso may dispense with this, well.

Again:

'The slowe lith and slepeth i the deofles berme, ase his deore deorling; and te deouel leieth his tutel adun to his earen, and tuteleth him al thet he euer wule. . . . The ginre glutun is thes fondes manciple. Uor he stiketh euer i the celere, other i the kuchene. His heorte is i the disches; his thouht is al i the neppe; his lif i the tunne; his soule i the crocke.'¹ . . .

History. — Between the beginning and the end of history are legendary traditions, credulous chronicles, barren annals, the glitter and clatter of kings and warriors, luxuriant, tangled, and fanciful narratives. When, as in the Middle Ages, credulity and looseness of thought are universal, it is impossible for men to engage in a philosophic study of the past, or even to record with accuracy what is taking place around them. So great is the general aptitude for the marvellous, that even the ablest writers are compelled to believe the most childish absurdities. Thus, it was well known that the city of Naples was founded on eggs; also, that the order of St. Michael was instituted in person by the archangel, who was himself the first knight. The Tartars, it was taught, proceeded from Tartarus, which some theologians said was an inferior kind of hell, but others declared to be hell itself. Hence, as the Turks were identical with the Tartars, it was only a proper and natural consequence that, since the Cross had fallen into Turkish hands, all Christian children had ten teeth less than formerly. Here is a story which **Anselm**, the Archbishop of Canterbury, one of the greatest and most vigorous minds in the twelfth century, tells of a certain St. Kieran. The saint, with thirty of his companions, has been executed in a wood by order of a Pagan prince, and their bodies are left lying there for the wolves and the wild birds. Note the fact, as the grave and good Anselm has really ascertained it:

'But now a miracle, such as was once heard of before in the Church in the person of the holy Denis, was again wrought by Divine Providence to preserve the bodies of these saints from profanation. The trunk of Kieran rose from the ground, and selecting first

¹ The sluggard lieth and sleepeth in the devil's bosom, as his dear darling; and the devil applieth his mouth to his ears, and tells him whatever he will. [For, this is certainly the case with every one who is not occupied in anything good: the devil assiduously talks, and the idle lovingly receive his lessons. He that is idle and careless is the devil's bosom-sleeper: but he shall on Doomsday be fearfully startled with the dreadful sound of the angels' trumpets, and shall awaken in terrible amazement in hell. "Arise, ye dead, who lie in graves: arise, and come to the Saviour's judgment."] . . . The greedy glutton is the devil's purveyor: for he always haunts the cellar or the kitchen. His heart is in the dishes; all his thought is of the table-cloth; his life is in the tun, his soul in the pitcher. [He cometh into the presence of his lord besmmtted and besmeared, with a dish in one hand and a bowl in the other. He talks much incoherently, and staggereth like a drunken man who seemeth about to fall, looks at his great belly, and the devil laughs so that he bursteth.]

his own head, and carrying it to a stream, and there carefully washing it, and afterwards performing the same sacred office for each of his companions, giving each body its own head, he dug graves for them and buried them, and last of all buried himself.'

With the appetite for the fabulous and superhuman is coupled—as if the heart were searching for its dead kindred—the love of antiquity. Hence history, in its first efforts, usually begins at a very remote period, and traces events in an unbroken series, even from the moment when Adam passed the gates of Paradise.

Add to this, that the historians were essentially theological,—priests, who lived remote from public affairs, considered the civil transactions as entirely subordinate to the ecclesiastical, were strongly infected with the love of wonder, and conceived it their business to enforce belief rather than to encourage inquiry. Thus **Matthew Paris**, the most eminent historian of the thirteenth century, to explain why the Mahometans abominate pork, informs us that Mahomet, having on one occasion gorged himself with food and drink till he was in an insensible condition, fell asleep on a dunghill, and in this disgraceful state was attacked and suffocated by a litter of pigs; for which reason his followers have ever since refused to partake of their flesh. This celebrated writer tells us further, to account for the origin of the Mahometan sect, that Mahomet was originally a cardinal, and became a heretic only because he failed in his design of being elected pope.

Perhaps the most reliable standard of the knowledge and opinions of these Ages of Faith is **Geoffrey's *History of the Britons*** (1147). This Welsh monk ascertains that after the capture of Troy, Ascanius fled from the city, and begat a son, who became father to Brutus; that Brutus, having extirpated the race of giants, founded London, settled the affairs of the island, and called it, after himself, by the name of Britain. A long line of kings is then led from oblivion into day, most of whom are famous for their abilities, and some for the prodigies which occur in their time. Thus during the reign of Rivallo 'it rained blood three days together, and there fell vast swarms of flies.' When Morvidus, 'a most cruel tyrant,' was on the throne,—

'There came from the coasts of the Irish sea, a most cruel monster, that was continually devouring the people upon the sea-coasts. As soon as he heard of it, he ventured to go and encounter it alone; when he had in vain spent all his darts upon it, the monster rushed upon him, and with open jaws swallowed him up like a small fish.'

The dauntless Arthur kills a giant from the shores of Spain, against whom armies were able to do nothing,—

‘For whether they attacked him by sea or land, he either overturned their ships with vast rocks, or killed them with several sorts of darts, besides many of them that he took and devoured half alive.’

Pausing, in the historical account, to relate the prophecy of Merlin, he tells us how, by the prophet’s advice, a pond was drained, at whose bottom were two hollow stones, and in them two dragons asleep, which hindered the building of Vortigern’s tower; then,—

‘As Vortigern, king of the Britons, was sitting upon the bank of the drained pond, the two dragons, one of which was white, the other red, came forth, and, approaching one another, began a terrible fight, and cast forth fire with their breath. But the white dragon had the advantage, and made the other fly to the end of the lake. And he, for grief at his flight, renewed the assault upon his pursuer, and forced him to retire. After this battle of the dragons, the king commanded Ambrose Merlin to tell him what it portended. Upon which he, bursting into tears, delivered what his prophetic spirit suggested to him, as follows:

“Woe to the red dragon, for his banishment hasteneth on. His lurking holes shall be seized by the white dragon, which signifies the Saxons whom you invited over; but the red denotes the British nation, which shall be oppressed by the white. Therefore shall its mountains be levelled as the valleys, and the rivers of the valleys shall run with blood. The exercise of religion shall be destroyed, and churches be laid open to ruin.”’

The history is brought down to the close of the seventh century, when the Britons, sunk in barbarism and no longer worthy of their name, were known only as ‘Welshmen’:

‘But as for the kings that have succeeded among them in Wales, since that time, I leave the history of them to Caradoc of Lancarvan, my contemporary; as I do also the kings of the Saxons to William of Malmesbury, and Henry of Huntington. But I advise them to be silent concerning the kings of the Britons, since they have not that book written in the British tongue, which Walter, archdeacon of Oxford, brought out of Brittany, and which being a true history, published in honour of those princes, I have thus taken care to translate.’

It is here that we first read of Gorboduc, whose story will be the theme of the earliest English tragedy; of Lear and his daughters; and, above all, of King Arthur as the recognized hero of national story.

A hundred years after its first publication, this book was generally adopted by writers on English history; and, for its repudiation in the sixteenth century, Vergil was considered as a man almost deprived of reason. A book thus stamped with every mark of approbation is surely no bad measure of the ages in which it was accredited and admired.

Mere annalists abounded, who set down minutely, in chrono-

logical order, what their eyes have seen and their ears have heard, till the reader is overpowered with weariness; only the dross of history; facts, in particles, in mass, without the abstract truth which interpenetrates them, and lies latent among them, like gold in the ore; dreams, portents, warnings, and the whole progeny of superstition. Here is the style of the chronicler in the tenth century:

‘538. When he had reigned four years, the sun was eclipsed from the first hour of the day to the third.

540. Again, two years after, the sun was eclipsed for half an hour after the third hour, so that the stars were everywhere visible in the sky.

661. After three years, Kenwalk again fought a battle near the town of Pontesbury, and took prisoner Wulfhere, son of Penda, at Ashdown, when he had defeated his army.

671. After one year more, there was a great pestilence among the birds, so that there was an intolerable stench by sea and land, arising from the carcasses of birds, both small and great.

674. After one year, Wulfhere, son of Penda, and Kenwalk fought a battle among themselves in a place called Bedwin.

677. After three years a comet was seen.

729. At the end of one year a comet appeared, and the holy bishop Egbert died.

733. Two years after these things, king Ethelbald received under his dominion the royal vill which is called Somerton. The same year the sun was eclipsed.

734. After the lapse of one year, the moon appeared as if stained with spots of blood, and by the same omen Tatwine and Bede departed this life.’

That monument of English prose which is at once most venerable and most valuable is the *Saxon Chronicle*, compiled from the monastic annals by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 891, and carried forward in the monasteries by various hands until the accession of Henry II, in the year 1154. Of value as a statistic epitome of English history during that long period, its chief value, perhaps, consists in the bird’s-eye view which it gives of linguistic changes from year to year, from century to century, until, as the last records are by contemporary writers, old English almost melts into modern. At distant intervals, when inspired by the transitory, the sombre, and the mysterious, it rises to a pathos like this on William the Conqueror:

‘Sharp death, that passes neither by rich men nor poor, seized him also. Alas, how false and how uncertain is this world’s weal! He, that was before a rich king and lord of many lands, had not then of all his land more than a space of seven feet; and he, that was whilom enshrined in gold and gems, lay there covered with mould.’

But, in general, it is vapid, empty, and uncritical, noting in the same lifeless tone the important and the trivial, without the slightest tinge of dramatic color or of discrimination. Blood gushes out of the earth in Berkshire near the birthplace of

Alfred. In Peterborough, under a Norman abbot, horns are heard at dead of night, and spectral huntsmen are seen to ride through the woods. The following extracts are fair specimens:

‘449. In this year Martian and Valentinian succeeded to the empire and reigned seven winters. And in their days Hengest and Horsa, invited by Wyrtegeorn, king of the Britons, sought Britain, on the shore which is named Ypwines fleot; first in support of the Britons, but afterwards they fought against them.

463. In this year Hengest and Æse fought against the Welsh and took countless booty; and the Welsh fled from the Angles as fire.

509. In this year St. Benedict the abbot, father of all monks, went to heaven.

661. In this year was the great destruction of birds.

792. Here Offa, king of Mercia, commanded that King Ethelbert should be beheaded; and Osred, who had been king of the Northumbrians, returning home after his exile, was apprehended and slain on the 18th day before the Calends of October. His body is deposited at Tinemouth. Ethelred this year, on the 3d day before the Calends of October, took unto himself a new wife whose name was Elfreda.

793. In this year dire forewarnings came over the land of the Northumbrians, and miserably terrified the people: there were excessive whirlwinds and lightnings, and fiery dragons were seen flying in the air. A great famine soon followed these tokens; and a little after that, in the same year, on the 6th of the Ides of January, the havoc of heathen men miserably destroyed God’s church at Lindisfarne, through rapine and slaughter. And Siega died on the 8th of the Cal. of March.’

Centuries will pass before history, which thus begins in romance and babble, will end in essay; before this enfeebled intellect will be able to rise from particular facts to discover the laws by which those facts are governed, exhibiting by judicious selection, rejection, and arrangement, the orderly progress of society and the nature of man.

Theology.—It was a favorite saying among the ancients, that death is ‘a law and not a punishment.’ It was a root-doctrine of the early Christians that disobedience—the fruit of the forbidden tree—‘brought death into the world and all our woe.’

The first represented man as pure and innocent till his will has sinned; the second, as under sentence of condemnation at the moment of birth. Plutarch had said that no funeral sacrifices were offered for infants, ‘because it is irreligious to lament for those pure souls who have passed into a better life and a happier dwelling-place.’ ‘Be assured,’ writes a saint of the sixth century, ‘that not only men who have obtained the use of their reason, but children who have begun to live in their mother’s womb and have there died, or who, just born, have passed away without the sacrament of holy baptism administered in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, must be punished by eternal tor-

ture.' The opinion so graphically expressed by a theologian who said 'he doubted not that there were infants less than a span long crawling about the floor of hell,' was held with great confidence in the early Church. Some, indeed, imagined that a special place was assigned to them, where there was neither suffering nor enjoyment. This was emphatically denied by St. Augustine, who declared that they descended into 'everlasting fire.' According to a popular legend, the redbreast was commissioned by the Deity to carry a drop of water to them to relieve their consuming thirst, and its breast was singed in piercing the flames.

Belief in a personal devil, as we have seen, was profound and universal. Sometimes he is encountered as a grotesque and hideous animal, sometimes as a black man, sometimes as a fair woman, sometimes as a priest haranguing in the pulpit, sometimes as an angel of light. He hovers forever about the Christian; but the sign of the cross, a few drops of holy water, or the name of Mary, can put him to immediate and ignominious flight.

Doubt was branded as a sin. To cherish prejudice was better than to analyze it. Those who diverged from the orthodox belief were doomed. Avenues of inquiry were painted with images of appalling suffering and malicious demons. An age which believes that a man is intensely guilty who holds certain opinions, and will cause the damnation of his fellows if he propagates them, has no moral difficulty in concluding that the heretic should be damned. A law of the Saxons condemned to death any one who ate meat in Lent, unless the priest was satisfied that it was a matter of absolute necessity. Gregory of Tours, recording 'the virtues of saints and the disasters of nations,' draws the moral of the history thus:

'Arius,¹ the impious founder of the impious sect, his entrails having fallen out, passed into the flames of hell; but Hilary, the blessed defender of the undivided Trinity, though exiled on that account, found his country in Paradise. King Clovis, who confessed the Trinity, and by its assistance crushed the heretics, extended his dominions through all Gaul. Alarie, who denied the Trinity, was deprived of his kingdom and his subjects, and, what was far worse, was punished in the future world.'

At the close of the twelfth century, among the measures devised to suppress heresy, the principal was the Inquisition. The function of the civil government was to execute its sentence. Placed in the hands of Dominicans and Franciscans, it was centralized

¹ 'I am persecuted,' Arius plaintively said, 'because I have taught that the Son had a beginning and the Father had not.'

by the appointment of an Inquisitor-General at Rome, with whom all branches of the tribunal—wherever the new corporation was admitted—were to be in constant communication. Its bloody success might seem to fulfil the portent of Dominic's nativity. Legend relates that his mother, in the season of childbirth, dreamed that a dog was about to issue from her womb, bearing a lighted torch that would kindle the whole world. We shall see its officers branding the disbeliever with hot irons, wrenching fingers asunder, shattering bones,—doing it all in the name of the Teacher who had said, 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, that ye love one another,'—yet doing it perhaps in devotion to the truth as, in their human frailty, they conceive it.

The pagan philosopher fixed his eye upon virtue; the Christian, upon sin. The former sought to awaken the sentiment of admiration; the latter, that of remorse. The one, powerless to restrain vice, was fitted to dignify man; the other, to regenerate him. Those who are insensible to the nobleness of virtue, may be so convulsed by the fear of judgment as to renew the tenor of their lives.

The pagans asserted the immateriality of the soul, because they believed that the body must perish forever. The Fathers, with the exception of Augustine, maintained that the soul was simply a second body. The material view derived strength from the firm belief in punishment by fire. This was the central fact of religion. Its ghastly imagery left nature stricken and forlorn. The agitations of craters were ascribed to the great press of lost souls. In the hush of evening, when the peasant boy asked why the sinking sun, as it dipped beneath the horizon, kindled with such a glorious red, he was answered, in the words of an old Saxon catechism, 'because it is then looking into hell.' The pen of the poet, the pencil of the artist, the visions of the monk, sustained the maddening terror with appalling vividness and minuteness. Through the vast of hell rolled a seething stream of sulphur, to feed and intensify the waves of fire. In the centre was Satan, bound by red-hot chains, on a burning gridiron. But his hands are free, and he seizes the damned, crushes them like grapes against his teeth, then sucks them down the fiery cavern of his throat. Hideous beings, of dreadful aspect and fantastic

form, with hooks of red-hot iron, plunge the lost alternately into fire and ice. Some of the souls are hung up by their tongues, others are sawn asunder between flaming iron posts, others gnawed by serpents, others with hammer and anvil are welded into a mass, others boiled and then strained through a cloth. A narrow bridge spans the abyss, and from this the shrieking souls are plunged into the mounting flames below.

But in every age there are some who stand upon the heights, above the ideal of their generation, and forecast the realized conceptions of the distant future. One of the most rationalistic minds of the fourth century was **Pelagius**, a British prelate. His persecutors were wont to say, 'Speak not to Pelagius, or he will convert you.' His principal tenets may be thus epitomized:

1. Adam was created mortal, and would have died whether he had sinned or not.

2. Adam's transgression affected only himself, not his posterity.

3. Mankind neither perish through Adam, nor are raised from the dead through Christ.

4. The law, as well as the Gospel, leads men to heaven.

5. Divine grace is conditioned on human worthiness.

6. Infants are in the same state as Adam before his fall.

He would not, however, venture to deny the necessity of infant baptism. Severely pressed on this point by his opponents, he replied that baptism was necessary to wash away the guilt of the child's pettishness!¹ One striking example of a bold free spirit in the tenth century was the famed **Erigena**. Alone in the middle ages, he maintained the figurative interpretation of hell-fire.

In 1277, propositions like the following were professed by philosophers at Paris: God is not triune and one, for trinity is incompatible with simplicity; the world and humanity are eternal; the resurrection of the body must not be admitted by philosophers; the soul, when separated from the body, cannot suffer by fire; theological discourses are based on fables; a man who has in himself moral and intellectual virtues, has all that is necessary to happiness.

¹ It is gratifying to know that St. Augustine, in answering this argument, declared distinctly that the crying of a baby is not sinful, and therefore does not deserve eternal damnation.

It may be needless to add explicitly—what the theology of the past so plainly suggests in the changed atmosphere of the present—that every age creates its image of God; and the image, conforming to the conceptions of its creator, is the measure of its civilization. This child shall one day grow up to manhood, and sing lofty psalms with noble human voice.

Ethics.—A nation or an age may be without moral science, but never without moral distinctions. The languages and literature of the world indicate that at all times, among all peoples, the idea of right and wrong has been recognized and applied. We shall find ethical notions, ethical life, powerfully operative, in mediæval England, but no ethical *system*. When society is semi-barbarous, the inculcation of morality devolves avowedly and exclusively upon the priests. Motives of action require to be materialized. Theology is the groundwork of morality. The moral faculty, too weak of itself to be a guide of conduct, must be reënforced by the rewards and punishments of religion,—the hope of Heaven and the fear of Hell. The propensity to evil, in consequence of original sin, is itself sin. The foundation of the moral law is the Divine will. Thus **Scotus** asserted that the good is good, not by its own inherent nature, but *because* God commands it. But there appear from time to time men who, rising above surrounding circumstances, anticipate the moral standard of a later age, and inculcate principles before their appropriate civilization has dawned. Thus **Abelard**, emphasizing the subjective aspect of conscience, represents that moral good and evil reside not in the act but in the intention. It is only the consenting to evil which is sin. The pure hate sin from love of virtue, not from a slavish fear of pain inflicted. The good is good, not *because* God commands it; but *He commands it because it is good*. God is the absolutely highest good, and that, through virtue, should be the aim of human endeavor. The civilizations of the future may estimate their relative excellence by their nearness to this eminence of thought!

Science.—Before the Conquest, in the popular series of *Solomon and Saturn*, it was asked, as a question that engaged English curiosity, ‘What is the substance of which Adam, the first man, was made?’ and the answer was:

‘I tell thee of eight pounds by weight.’ ‘Tell me what they are called.’—‘I tell thee the first was a pound of earth, of which his flesh was made; the second was a pound of fire, whence his blood came, red and hot; the third was a pound of wind, and thence his breathing was given to him; the fourth was a pound of welkin, thence was his unsteadiness of mood given him; the fifth was a pound of grace, whence was given him his growth; the sixth was a pound of blossoms, whence was given him the variety of his eyes; and seventh was a pound of dew, whence he got his sweat; the eighth was a pound of salt, and thence were his tears salt.’

From this we may infer and estimate the rest. The same question and answer will be found in *The Maisters of Oxford's Catechism*, written in fifteenth-century English! What are the condition and hope of science, when inquisitive children, who delight in riddles and enigmas, reduce it to a religious catechism? The overwhelming importance attached to theology diverted to it all those intellects which in another condition of society would have been employed in the investigations of science. Everything was done to cultivate habits the opposite of scientific,—fear and faith. Innovation of every kind was regarded as a crime. Superior knowledge, shown in speculation, was called heresy; shown in the study of mathematics or of nature, it was called magic,—a proof that such pursuits were rare. In the thirteenth century, few students of geometry proceeded farther than the fifth proposition of the first book of Euclid,—the famous asses' bridge. What must be the state of the natural sciences, when the science of demonstration, which is their foundation, is neglected? Indeed, the name of the mathematics was given chiefly to astrology. Mathematicians were defined to be ‘those who, from the position of the stars, the aspect of the firmament, and the motions of the planets, discover things that are to come.’ It was universally believed that the whole destiny of man is determined by the star that presides over his nativity. Many could not, as they imagined, safely appear in public, or eat, or bathe, unless they had first carefully consulted the almanac, to ascertain the place and appearance of their particular planet. Comets and meteors foreshadowed the fate of empires; and the signs of the zodiac served only to predict the career of individuals and the development of communities. But as these constant observations, and the construction of instruments required for making them, led to astronomy; so alchemy, which aimed to transmute all metals into gold, or find the elixir of life, led to chemistry. An alchem-

ist records that in a secret chamber of the Tower of London, he performed in the royal presence the experiment of transmuting some crystal into diamond, of which Edward I, he says, caused some little pillars to be made for the tabernacle of God. The healing art, from being practised only by women, who employed charms and spells with their herbs and decoctions, gradually became the province of priests, who trusted to relics, holy water, and other superstitions. Medicine had in the thirteenth century been taken in a great measure out of the hands of the clergy, though it was still in the main a mixture of superstition and quackery. The distinction between the physician and the apothecary was understood, and surgery also began to be followed as a separate branch.

With Edward the Confessor, about the middle of the eleventh century, began the extraordinary usage of touching, to cure the disease called the 'King's Evil,'—a usage that continued for nearly seven hundred years. When Malcolm and Macduff have fled to England, it is in the palace of Edward the Confessor that Malcolm inquires of an English doctor,—

‘Comes the king forth, I pray you?’

and the answer is,—

‘Ay, sir: there are a crew of wretched souls
That stay his cure: their malady convinces
The great assay of art; but at his touch,
Such sanctity hath heaven given his hand,
They presently amend.’

When Macduff asks,—

‘What’s the disease he means?’

Malcolm answers,—

‘Tis called the evil:
A most miraculous work in this good king;
Which often, since my here-remain in England,
I have seen him do. How he solicits heaven,
Himself best knows: but strangely-visited people,
All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
The mere despair of surgery, he cures;
Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,
Put on with holy prayers: and ’tis spoken
To the succeeding royalty he leaves
The healing benediction.’ . . .

All which proves, if anything, that in the treatment of disease faith is more potent than physic.

The supposed influence of the stars, with a crowd of superstitions, naturally followed from the geocentric theory of the

universe. When it is believed, as in the Middle Ages, that the earth is the great central object of the whole created world, around which the sun and moon alike revolve, and the stars are but inconsiderable lights destined to garnish its firmament,—man becomes the centre of all things, and every startling phenomenon has some bearing upon his acts; the eclipse, the comet, the meteor, the tempest, are all intended for him.

The existence of the antipodes, or persons inhabiting the opposite side of the globe, and consequently having the soles of their feet directly opposed to ours, was disproved by quoting St. Paul,—that all men are made to live upon the ‘*face* of the earth,’ from which it clearly follows that they do not live upon more faces than one, or upon the back. If we examine a little farther, we are told that the earth is fixed firmly upon its foundations, from which we may at least infer that it is not suspended in the air. In the sixteenth century, for asserting that the earth moves, Copernicus will be censured, and Galileo will be imprisoned.

It was taught as a firmly established principle that water has no gravity in or on water, since it is *in proprio loco*, in its own place;—that air has no gravity on water, since it is above water, which is its proper place;—that earth in water tends downward, since its place is below water;—that water rises in a pump or syphon, because nature abhors a vacuum.

Peter Lombard quotes our Anglo-Saxon Bede that the waters above the firmament are the solid crystalline heavens in which the stars are fixed, ‘for crystal, which is so hard and transparent, is made of water’; and mentions also the opinion of St. Augustine, that the waters above the heavens are in a state of vapor, in minute drops:

‘If, then, water can, as we see in clouds, be so minutely divided that it may be thus supported as vapor on air, which is naturally lighter than water; why may we not believe that it floats above that lighter celestial element in still minuter drops and still lighter vapors? But in whatever manner the waters are there, we do not doubt that they are there.’

Philosophy.—The long and barren period which intervened between Proclus of the fifth century, in whom the speculative activity of ancient Greece disappeared, and Bacon of the sixteenth, in whom it was reformed and fertilized, was characterized, as a whole, by indistinctness of ideas, bias to authority, and

impatience of dissent. Poverty of thought disposed men to lean upon an intellectual superior,—Plato, Aristotle, or the Fathers; to read nature through books; to talk of what great geniuses had said; to study the opinions of others as the only mode of forming their own; to criticise, to interpret, to imitate, to dispute. The subtlety which found in certain accredited writings all the truth it desired, forbade others to find, there or elsewhere, any other truths. The slave became a tyrant.

The Christian Fathers made philosophy the handmaid of religion. The whole philosophic effort was to mediate between the dogmas of faith and the demands of reason, with church doctrine as the criterion or standard. The method was three-fold: 1. That of the Fathers, built on Scripture, modified by the principles of the Grecian schools. 2. Conjointly with Scripture, the use of the Fathers themselves. 3. The application of the Aristotelian dialectics.¹ Philosophy thus subservient to the Christian articles of belief was called **Scholasticism**, a name derived from the cloister schools opened by Charlemagne for the pursuit of speculative studies, which in those days were prosecuted only by the clergy, they alone having leisure or inclination for such work. The teachers of the seven liberal arts, as afterwards all who occupied themselves with the sciences, and especially with philosophy, following the tradition and example of the schools, were called **Scholastics**. Scholasticism, therefore, may be defined as *the reproduction of ancient philosophy under the control of ecclesiastical doctrine, with an accommodation, in cases of discrepancy between them, of the former to the latter*. Its leading representatives till the fourteenth century are Erigena, with whom it begins, born and educated in Ireland; Roscelin and Abelard, of France; Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas, of Italy; Anselm, of Normandy; Alexander Hales, ‘the Irrefragable,’ and Duns Scotus, ‘the Subtle Doctor,’ of England.

The views of **Erigena**, (800–877) are decidedly Platonic. God, the creating and uncreated being, alone has essential subsistence. He is the essence of all things, the beginning and the end of all. Among created natures are some which themselves create,—*Ideas*, or the archetypes of things, the first causes of individual existences. These are contained in the Divine Wisdom, or Word

¹ That branch of logic which teaches the rules and modes of reasoning.

—the Son; and the influence of the Holy Ghost, or Divine Love, causes them to develop into the forms of the eternal world. More than a thousand years before, Plato had said:

‘Now, Idea is, as regards God, a mental operation by him (the notions of God, eternal and perfect in themselves); as regards us, the first things perceptible by mind; as regards Matter, a standard; but as regards the world, perceptible by sense, a pattern; but as considered with reference to itself, an existence.’

The creation from nothing is out of God’s own essence—an unfolding. Our life is His life in us. As the substance of all things in shape and time, He descends to us, not alone in the act of incarnation, but in all created existence. As out of Him all things are evolved, so into Him all things will ultimately return,—a conception not in harmony with the doctrinal system of the Church. True philosophy and true religion are one. But true religion is not identical with dogmatism. On the contrary, in case of a collision between authority and reason, let reason be given the preference.

Plato taught *Realism*, the doctrine that universals—species, genera, or types—have a real existence apart from individual objects. Aristotle, on the contrary, taught *Nominalism*, the doctrine that only individuals exist in reality,—that abstract ideas are nothing but abstractions, general *names*, not general *things*. Of the Scholastic Nominalists, **Roscelin**, a little before 1100, was the first distinguished advocate. It was soon evident that he was in antagonism with the dogma of the Trinity. If, said his opponents, only individuals really exist, then the three persons of the Trinity are three individuals, or three Gods,—that, or else they have no existence. He admits the fatal heresy, is summoned before a Council, and there forced publicly to recant; escapes to England, and perishes in exile; but the seed sown fructifies, and Nominalism afterwards becomes the reigning doctrine.

Roscelin was opposed by **Anselm** (1033–1109). His motto was, *Credo, ut intelligam*. Knowledge must rest on faith, and submission to the Church must be unconditional. Goodness, truth, virtue, etc., possess real existence, independent of individual beings, not merely immanent in them. On this realistic basis he founds a proof of the divine existence, with which his fame is chiefly connected. The argument is an attempt to prove the existence of God from the very idea which we have of Him—the

summum bonum, or greatest object that can be conceived. This conception exists in the intellect of all who have the idea of God, —in the intellect of the atheist as well. But the *greatest* cannot be in the mind only, for then something still greater would be conceivable which should exist not only in the mind but in external reality. Hence the greatest must exist at the same time, both subjectively and objectively. God, therefore, is not merely conceived by us,—He also really exists.

One of Roscelin's pupils was the youthful **Abelard** (1079–1142), whose unfortunate love-relations, more than his eloquence or subtlety, rendered his name immortal. Posterity feels interested in him because Eloise loved him; and when the gates of the convent close forever on her, the warm interest in him disappears. His position in dialectics, while intermediate between untenable extremes, is not far removed from strict Nominalism. His chief distinction is regular and systematic application of dialectics to theology. Without being the first to rationalize dogmatics, he went farther in a way which had already been opened up, and may thus be said to have given to Scholasticism its peculiar and permanent form. Asserting the supremacy of reason, he represents the insurgent spirit of those times. Writes St. Bernard to the pope: *Transgreditur fines quos posuerunt patres nostri*—‘he goes beyond the limits set by our ancestors!’—an offense in all ages, in all nations. The revolutionist further ‘transgresses’ by the composition of *Sic et Non*, in which he sets forth the contradictory statements of the Fathers, designed, as he distinctly informs us, to train the mind to vigorous and healthy doubt, in fulfilment of the injunction, ‘Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.’ Doubt begins. Disputation waxes stronger. In every city of Europe, logic plays around every subject, the most profound and sacred, like lambent flame. The struggle thus begun has not yet ended.

Abelard's pupil—**Peter Lombard**, who died in 1164—prepared a manual of theology called *The Book of Sentences*, which became, and for centuries continued, the basis of theological instruction and a guide for the dialectical treatment of theological problems.

Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) brought Scholasticism to its highest stage of development, by the utmost accommodation of

the Aristotelian doctrines to those of ecclesiastical orthodoxy. With him, as with Aristotle, knowledge—and preëminently knowledge of God—is the supreme end of life. The Divine existence is demonstrable only *a posteriori*, namely, from the contemplation of the world as the work of God. The order of the world presupposes an Orderer. There must be a First Mover or a First Cause, since the chain of effects and causes cannot be infinite. God exists as a pure, immaterial form. Before His creative fiat, time was not. The soul of man is immortal, because it is immaterial. It is immaterial because it thinks the universal; whereas, if it were a form inseparable from matter, like the soul of a brute, it could think only the individual. Pure form can neither destroy itself, nor, through the destruction of a material substratum, be destroyed. Yet the human soul does not exist before the body. Nor is its knowledge the mere recollection of ideas beheld in a preëxistent state, as Plato assumed.

While the earlier scholastics had known only the *Logic* of Aristotle, **Alexander Hales** (died 1245) first used his entire philosophy, including the metaphysics, as the auxiliary of Christian theology.

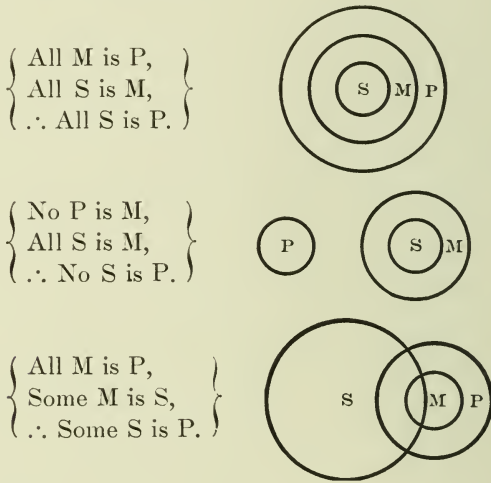
A distinguished opponent of Thomas Aquinas and his system was **Duns Scotus**, who in 1308 died at Cologne, whither he had been sent to take part in a debate. His strength, like that of Kant, lay in the acute and negative criticism of others rather than in the establishment of his own position. Trained in mathematical studies, he knew what was meant by proving, and could therefore recognize in most of the pretended proofs their invalidity. Without denying the truth of the theorems themselves, he rejects much of the reasoning employed to prove the being of God and the immortality of the soul, and bases the evidence on our moral nature. Revelation alone renders them certain. Arguments should be viewed with distrust. The domain of reason he would further contract; that of faith, still more extend. The world is but a mean, by the right use of which the only end of its existence—the salvation of mankind—is attained. This is practical,—at least in desire, as of one whose eyes are fixed on sin, black death, and the Judgment, not daring to embark on the great journey with unsafe guides.

The heavy instrument supplied to these disputants by Aris-

tote was the Syllogism, which, as every student of logic understands, contains:

1. *Three terms*, the extremes and the middle; or the major term (*P*)—predicate of the conclusion, the minor term (*S*)—subject of the conclusion, and the middle term (*M*)—medium of comparison.

2. *Three propositions*, the premises and the conclusion; or the major premise in which *M* and *P* are compared, the minor premise in which *S* and *M* are compared, and the conclusion in which the relation of *S* and *P* is inferred,—the proposition to be proved. Thus, symbolized:



Or, concretely:

Every responsible agent is a free agent,
 Man is a responsible agent,
 \therefore Man is a free agent.

Plato, Aristotle, the Apostles, and the Fathers, gave the premises; ingenuity piled up cathedrals of conclusion. What more agreeable exercise to speculative minds than tracing the consequences of assumed principles? It is deductive, like geometry, self-satisfying and inexhaustible. As there could be no genuine progress, so there was no tendency to come to an end. A ceaseless grinding of the air in metaphysic mills:

‘They stand
 Locked up together hand in hand;
 Every one leads as he is led,
 The same bare path they tread,
 And dance like fairies a fantastic round,
 But neither change their motion nor their ground.’

What does the reader think of the pregnant announcement that ‘an individual man is Peter, because his humanity is combined with *Petreity*’?—of the division of matter into firstly first, secondly first, and thirdly first?—of the chimerical questions, whether identity, similitude, and equality are real relations in God? whether, *the place and body being retained*, God can cause the body to have no position? whether the divine essence engendered the Son, or was engendered by the Father? why the three persons together are not greater than one alone? if God can know more things than He is aware of? whether Christ at the first instant of conception had the use of free judgment? whether He was slain by Himself or by another? whether the dove in which the Holy Spirit appeared was a real animal? whether two glorified bodies can occupy one and the same place at the same time? whether in the state of innocence all children were masculine?—of the puerile puzzles whether a person in the purchase of a whole cloak also buys the cowl? whether, when a hog is carried to market with a rope tied about its neck and held at the other end by a man, the hog is really carried to market by the man or by the rope?

What truth could issue thence? What wonder that Scholasticism is a vast cemetery of departed reputation? Yet underneath this word-quibbling are the deepest problems of Ontology; and the human hearts which throb to them are, as we shall see, prophetic of the English soul:

‘A great delight is granted
 When in the spirit of the ages planted,
 We mark how, ere our time, a sage has thought,
 And then, how far his work, and grandly, we have brought.’

Résumé.—Gradually the past is explaining the present. Through anarchy, conflict, and constraint, the Witan and Great Council are transformed into the English Parliament, which continues to this day the same in all essential points. The House of Commons, archetype of representative assemblies, holds its first sittings. French connections are sundered; Wales is annexed

forever to the English crown; Ireland is conquered, though not subdued; and the famous heroes, Wallace and Bruce, wrest from Edward I the liberties of Scotland.

The mass of the agricultural population is rising from the position of mere slaves to that of tenant-farmers; and the advance of society, as well as the natural increase of population, is freeing the laborer from local bondage. The government of the English towns passes from the hands of an oligarchy to those of the rising middle classes.

The space of about a thousand years, extending from the fall of the Western Empire, in the middle of the fifth century, to that of the Eastern, in the middle of the fifteenth, comprises two nearly equal periods,—the gradual decline and the gradual revival of letters. Convents, meanwhile, are the asylum of knowledge, and secure the thread which connects us with the literature of classic Greece and Rome. With few exceptions, the writers are priestly or monastic.

The Conquest, breaking the mental stagnation, introduces England into a free communion with the intellectual and artistic life of the Continent, and subjects it to the two ruling mediæval impulses,—Feudalism and the Church, the one producing the adventurous hero, the other the mystical monk; both working together for the amelioration of mankind, both running to excess, and degenerating by the violence of their own strength. Under the first, slavery is modified into serfdom; under the second, learning is preserved, and a sense of the unity of Christendom maintained; under both, springs up the idea of chivalry, moulding generous instincts into gallant institutions.

From the fifth to the thirteenth century, the Church elaborates the most splendid organization which the world has ever seen. During the last three centuries of the period, her destiny achieved, faith and reason begin to be sundered, and violence is used for the repression of inquiry. The spiritual power, grown corrupt by growing ambitious, is resisted by the temporal. Kings war with popes, and popes struggle to put their feet upon the necks of kings. Religion, from a ceremonial, is being converted into a reality. Hermit and friar carry spiritual life home to the heart of the nation.

First English poems are of war and religion,—never of love.

The greatest are *Beowulf*, an epic imported from the Continent, and re-written in parts by a Christian Englishman; and Cædmon's *Paraphrase of the Bible*, written about 670, and for us the beginning of English poetry. Of scattered pieces after Cædmon, all Christian in tone, the finest are *Judith*, *The Ruin*, and *The Grave*. The war poetry, sung from feast to feast and in the halls of kings, dies out after the English are trodden down by the Normans. English literature—in a state of languishing depression at the Conquest—is thereafter displaced by the romance, in which, as favorite heroes, Arthur, Alexander, and Charlemagne, dressed as feudal knights, slay dragons and giants, storm enchanted castles, set free beautiful ladies, and perform other wondrous deeds. Not, however, till nearly a century has passed away—when Norman noble and English yeoman, Norman abbot and English priest, are welded into one—is the rhyming romantic poetry of France naturalized. In its rise under Edward I, native genius, in the vernacular, is poetical. The poetry is religious, story-telling, and lyric, typified in the *Ormulum*, the *Brut*, the *Owl and Nightingale*. As a whole the literature is characterized by reality, directness, and truth to nature. Elevated in tone, eminently practical in aim,—owing in a considerable degree to its insular position, it contrasts strongly with much of the contemporaneous expression of Continental genius, which is less the reflection of earnest, active life, than a magic mirror showing forth the unsubstantial dreams of an idle, luxurious, and fantastic people.

Latin is the key to erudition,—the prevailing language of the learned professions, of law and physic, as well as of divinity, in all their grades. French, the language of romance, lives upon the lips of royalty, rank, and beauty. In the storm of national calamity English ceases to be generally either written or read; and when in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries it begins to raise its diminished head, it has been converted, substantially, from an inflectional to a non-inflectional tongue, a natural mutation accelerated by the Norman invasion. The *Chronicle*, the *Brut*, and the *Ormulum* prove its continuity and victory.

The enthusiasm of the Crusades is succeeded by an enthusiasm of study, imprisoned and limited by the scholastic logic and metaphysics, under whose ascendancy elegant literature pales.

Scholasticism reveals already the dominant tendencies of English thought,—subordination of theory to practice, in John of Salisbury; scepticism as to ultimate philosophical questions, in Scotus; devotion to physical science as a thing of demonstrative and practical utility, in Bacon.

The twelfth and thirteenth centuries are the seed-time of all modern language and literature. The former is the great turning point of the European intellect. Then it is that a general revival of Latin literature takes place; then—the first time for many centuries—the long slumber of untroubled orthodoxy is broken by hydra-headed heresies; then the standard of an impartial philosophy is first planted by Abelard; then the passion for astrology and its fatalism revives with the revival of pagan learning, and penetrates into the halls of nobles and the palaces of kings; men are learning to doubt, without learning that doubt is innocent, compelled, by the new mental activity, to a variety of opinions, while the old credulity persuades them that all opinions but one are suggestions of the devil. The latter is a decisive epoch, not more for the constitutional history of England than for its intellectual progress. Its general activity and ardor are shown by the great concourse of students to the universities, by the number and eminence of the schoolmen, by religious and political satires, by that flame of zeal which sweeps the masses from their native soil to hurl them upon Holy Land. Then the French romantic poetry with its craving for excitement, begins to be transfused into a medium intelligible throughout England; then, above all, a definite language is formed, and there is room for a great writer.

Slowly, step by step, the England of the Doomsday Book, the England of the Curfew, the England of crusaders, monks, astrologers, serfs, and outlaws, is becoming the England of liberty, knowledge, and trade,—the England that spreads her dominion over every quarter of the globe, and scatters the seeds of empires and republics in the jungles of India and the forests of America.

CÆDMON.

The Milton of our Forefathers,—*D'Israeli*.

Biography.—His life lies buried in obscurity and fable. We obtain our first glimpses of him as a peasant, on some of the abbey lands of Whitby, who, though his sun was already declining, had never dreamed that he was a subline poet. A marvelous incident—according to the taste and manner of the age—explains his literary history:

Once, sitting with his companions over the ale-cup, while they sang in turn the praises of war or beauty, when the circling 'Wood of Joy' passed to him, he rose and went out with a sad heart, for he alone—all unskilled—was unable to weave his thoughts into verse. Wearied and desponding, he lay down to rest in a stall of oxen, of which he was the appointed night-guard. As he slept, an angel appeared to him and said: 'Cædmon, sing some song to me!' The herdsman urged that he was mute and unmusical. 'Nevertheless, thou shalt sing!' retorted the benignant stranger. 'What shall I sing?' rejoined the minstrel who had never sung. 'Sing the origin of things!' His imprisoned intellect was unlocked, and he listened to the wonder of his own voice through eighteen lines of 'Let us praise God, maker of heaven and earth.' In the morning he remembered the lines, flew to the town-reeve¹ to announce his dream, told how, in one memorable night—in capable even of reading his own Saxon, after a whole life spent without ever surmising himself to be poetical—he had become a poet, and desired to use his gift for the instruction of the people in the Heavenly Word. Good Abbess Hilda in turn received him, heard him recite, was favorably impressed with his rare talents, gave him an exercise to test his new-found skill, then welcomed him, with all his goods, into the monastery; the brethren read to him, from Genesis to Revelations, wrote down his oracular sayings, and committed them to memory; so winsome, so divine, were his song and his verse. Day by day, piece by piece, the poem grew, till he had turned various parts of Sacred Writ into English poetry. Severed from the cares of

¹ *Reeve*, from Saxon *gerefa*, denotes a magistrate or officer: obsolete except in compounds, as *shire-reeve* (now written *sheriff*).

the active world, in the deep calm of monastic seclusion, he lived and wrought, living for the Unseen alone, and undisturbed by either anxiety or doubt. One of the aspects, is this, in which the monastic period of literature appears eminently beautiful,—freedom from the turmoil and impatience, the vanity and pride, of modern literary life. Slowly wasted by disease, he died in 680, near the hour of midnight, peacefully,—

‘Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.’

Here, to the inquisitive who would go on knocking, the door is closed. Over the outer history of the man, the accidental circumstances of his life, oblivion ‘blindly scattereth her poppy.’ Of more worth is the inner history of genius. The Dreamer lives in his dream.

Writings.—The *Paraphrase*, containing, besides other portions of the Bible, the story of the Creation, the Revolt, the Fall, the Flood, and the Exodus. The sole manuscript is of the tenth century; disappearing from visible existence, it was accidentally discovered in the seventeenth, and first published in 1655, a thousand years after its composition.

Filled with the grandeur of his subject, in words of such majesty as were never uttered of human heroes or Scandinavian gods, he sounds the key-note of a new poetic strain:

‘Most right is it that we, heaven’s Guard,
Glory, King of hosts! with words should praise,
With hearts should love. He is of powers the efficacy;
Head of all high creations;
Lord Almighty! In Him beginning never
Or origin hath been; but He is aye supreme
Over heaven-thrones, with high majesty
Righteous and mighty!’

A concrete of exclamations from a strong, barbarous heart; a song of a servant of Odin, tonsured now, and clad in the habiliments of a monk. Then follow the rebellion of Satan, the expulsion of the angels, and their confinement in the fiery gulf. The Hebrew Tempter, transformed by the German sense of might of individual manhood, becomes a republican, disdainful of vassalage to God:

“Wherefore,” he said, “shall I toil?
No need have I of master. I can work
With my own hands great marvels, and have power
To build a throne more worthy of a God,
Higher in heaven! Why shall I, for His smile,

Serve Him, bend to Him thus in vassalage?
 I may be God as He.
 Stand by me, strong supporters, firm in strife.
 Hard-mooded heroes, famous warriors,
 Have chosen me for chief; one may take thought
 With such for counsel, and with such secure
 Large following. My friends in earnest they,
 Faithful in all the shaping of their minds;
 I am the master, and may rule this realm."¹

The two religions, Christian and pagan, so like, mingle their incongruities, images, and legends. The patriarchs are earls; Abraham is 'a guardian of bracelets' (wealth); the sons of Reuben are vikings (sea-pirates); the Ethiopians are 'a people brown with the hot coals of heaven'; God is the 'Blithe-hearted King,' the Overlord, ruler of his thanes with an iron hand:

'Stern of mood He was; He gript them in His wrath; with hostile hands He gript them, and crushed them in His grasp.'

For *three nights and days*² the Fiend, with his comrades, fell headlong from the skies down to 'the swart hell,—a land void of light and full of flame.'³

'There they have at even, immeasurably long, each of all the fiends, a renewal of fire with sulphur charged; but cometh ere dawn the eastern wind-frost, bitter cold, ever fire or dart.'⁴

In the 'torture-house' lies the Apostate in chains, proud, fearless, self-conscious, and indomitable, like the Northern warriors; 'the haughty king, who of angels erst was brightest, fairest in heaven, beloved of his Master; so beauteous was his form, he was like to the light stars.'⁵ Overcome, shall he be subdued?

'Within him boiled his thoughts about his heart;
 Without, the wrathful fire pressed hot upon him.
 He said: "This narrow place is most unlike
 That other we once knew in heaven high,
 And which my Lord gave me; though own it now

¹ See *Paradise Lost*, I and V, for remarkable resemblances.

² *Nine times the space that measures day and night
 To mortal men.—Paradise Lost.*

³ Yet from these flames
 No light, but rather *darkness visible*.—*Ibid.*

⁴ The bitter change
 Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more fierce,
 From beds of raging *fire* to starve in *ice*.—*Ibid.*

And,—
 Eternal darkness for the dwellers in fierce *heat* and *ice*.—*Inferno*.

⁵ His form had not yet lost
 All her original brightness, nor appeared
 Less than archangel ruined.—*Paradise Lost*.

And,—
 His countenance as the morning star that guides
 The starry flock, allured them.—*Ibid.*

We must not, but to Him must cede our realm.
 Yet right He hath not done to strike us down
 To hell's abyss,—of heaven's realm bereft,—
 Which with mankind to people He hath planned.
 Pain sorest this, that Adam, wrought of earth,
 On my strong throne shall sit, enjoying bliss,
 While we endure these pangs,—hell-torments dire.
 Oh! woe is me! could I but use my hands
 And might I be from here a little time,—
 One winter's space,—then with this host would I,—
 But press me hard these iron bands,—this coil
 Of chain,—and powerless I am, so fast
 I'm bound. Above is fire; below is fire;
 A loathier landscape never have I seen;
 Nor smolders aye the fire, but hot throughout.
 In chains; my pathway barred; my feet tied down;
 These hell-doors bolted all; I may not move
 From out these limb-bands; binds me iron hard,—
 Hot-forged great grindles! God has griped me tight
 About the neck.”¹

But to him who has lost everything, vengeance is left. Indissolubly bound, he dispatches an associate to wreak his ire on the innocent pair in Eden. The emissary was ‘prompt in arms; he had a crafty soul; this chief set his helmet on his head; he many speeches knew of guileful words; wheeled up from thence, he departed through the doors of hell,’² flinging aside the flames with the bravery of his sovereign. Adam is invincible, but Eve is ensnared; ‘for to her,’ we are assured, ‘a weaker mind had the Creator assigned;’ ‘yet’—let us treat her tenderly—‘did she it through faithful mind; she knew not that hence so many ills, sinful woes, must follow to mankind.’ A theme fitter for the historian or translator; too domestic for the barbarian poet’s vigor and sublimity. Tumult, murder, combat and death are needed to swell into flame the native instinct. When, later on, he describes the flight of the Israelites, the strong breast heaves, and he shouts, incapable of restraining his passion:

‘They preferred their arms; the war advanced; bucklers glittered, trumpets blared, standards rattled; . . . around them screamed the fowls of war; the ravens sang, greedy of battle, dewy-feathered; over the bodies of the host—dark choosers of the slain—the wolves sang their horrid even-song.’

With full zest, while the blood mounts in blinding currents to his eyes, he recounts the destruction of Pharaoh and his host:

¹ See *Paradise Lost*, I and IV, for singular correspondences.

² Reminding us of—

The infernal doors that on their hinges grate
 Harsh thunder.—*Paradise Lost*.

‘The folk was affrighted, the flood-dread seized on their sad souls; ocean wailed with death, the mountain heights were with blood besteam’d, the sea foamed with gore, crying was in the waves, the water full of weapons, a death-mist rose; the Egyptians were turned back; trembling they fled, they felt fear; would that host gladly find their homes; their vaunt grew sadder; against them, as a cloud, rose the fell rolling of the waves; there came not any of that host to home, but from behind enclosed them fate with the wave. Where wave e’er lay, the sea raged. Their might was merged, the streams stood, the storm rose high to heaven; the loudest arm-cry the hostile uttered; the air above was thickened with dying voices. . . . Ocean raged, drew itself up on high, the storms rose, the corpses rolled.’

Verily, the heathen fire has not burned out, nor the heathen imagery dropped out of memory and power. The old faith and the new coëxist and combine. When the monks read to him the opening of Genesis—‘And the earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the spirit of God moved over the waters’—he is reminded of his ancestral cosmogony as preserved in the *Edda*, and the coloring of those ancient dreams clings to his description:

‘There had not as yet, save cavern-shade, ought been; but this wide abyss stood deep and dim, strange to its Lord, idle and useless; on which looked with his eyes the king firm of mind, and beheld those places void of joys; saw the dark cloud lower in eternal night, swart under heaven, dark and waste, until this worldly creation, through the word, existed of the Glory-King. . . . The earth as yet was not green with grass; ocean cover’d, swart in eternal night, far and wide the dusky ways.’

The Cædmonian poem, it is probable, is one of the many attempts of the monkish recluse to familiarize the people with the miraculous and religious narratives of Scripture by a paraphrase in the vernacular idiom. Of the two books composing it, only the first is continuous; the second is fragmentary. Perhaps the discordances are no greater than we should expect in a manuscript text passing from generation to generation; perhaps they indicate that the paraphrase, interrupted at intervals, was resumed by some successor, as idling monks at a subsequent period were often the continuators of voluminous romances. Its new mythology will frame the miracle-play. Milton, finding his originals in the Puritans, as Cædmon in the Vikings, will adopt it in his epic, assisted in the development of his thought by all the resources of Latin culture and civilization.

Style.—Iterative, vivid, harsh, curt, emphatic, ejaculative; as in all true Saxon poetry, whose genuine type is the war-song, where the verses fall like sword-strokes in the thick of battle.

Rank.—Nature in her first poverty, displaying the primitive force of the self-taught. A type of the grandeur, depth, and

tragic tone which the German race was to give to the religion of the East. Never before had the English language clothed such sublime thoughts. Never had limitless desire so struggled, giant-like, with limited utterance. 'Others after him,' says Bede, 'attempted, in the English nation, to compose religious poems, but none could ever compare with him.' Above the din of war and bloodshed, amid the brutality and mental inaction of centuries, he raised his voice and sang the substance of which all the ancient myths were but the shadow; sang with such fervor and persuasion that 'many were often excited to despise the world, and to aspire to heaven.' The prototype of Milton, as the picture exists in the sketch: the one, the rough draft; the other, the finished intellectual ideal. To the one Satan is a Saxon convict, —fastened by the neck, his hands manacled, and his feet bound; to the other, the ideal being,—

'Whose stature reached the sky, and on whose crest
Sat Horror plumed.'

The precursor of a new order of ideas, standing at the confluence of two civilizations; a monumental figure placed between two epochs and participating in their two characters, as a stream which, flowing between two different soils, is tinged by both their hues.

Character.—Cheerful and kind, able to obey or command; attentive and punctual in the performance of duty; serious, eminently religious, fond of prayer. 'He never,' writes Bede, 'could compose frivolous and useless poems, but those alone pertaining to religion became his religious tongue.' A rough, noble expression of the vague, vast mystery of the world and of man. A moment, as old age closes upon him, he lifts the veil, and we see, as we read, the charity, pathos, resignation, Northern melancholy, of the man:

'Soul-longings many in my day I've had.
My life's hope now is that the Tree of Triumph
Must seek I. Than all others oftener
Did I alone extol its glories;
Thereto my will is bent, and when I need
A claim for shelter, to the Rood I'll go.
Of mightiest friends, from me are many now
Unclasped, and far away from our world's joys;
They sought the Lord of Hosts, and now in heaven,
With the High-Father, live in glee and glory;
And for the day most longingly I wait,

When the Saviour's Rood that here I contemplate
 From this frail life shall take me into bliss,—
 The bliss of Heaven's wards: the Lord's folk there
 Is seated at the feast; there's joy unending;
 And He shall set me there in glory,
 And with the saints their pleasures I shall share.'

Influence.—He draped the Oriental imagery of the Bible in the English fashion, and brought it within the comprehension of the humblest. His verses became part of the people's thinking, created for it a new groove, and the recollections of Valhalla paled before the more spiritual and real splendors of the New Elysium. He wrought no revolution in the form of English song, but introduced into it, through the faith of Christ, new realms of fancy.

In our rasping life of gain, we are apt to imagine that art is of little account, but when the years roll by, we learn well enough what the ages value. No doubt this Cædmon, in his ill-furnished room, seemed to the practical man of trade a pitiful cipher, quite out of the march of important affairs; but even their names are forgotten, and all their wealth would now be given for one of the songs of the Whitby shepherd.

BEDE.

The Father of English learning.—*Burke.*

Biography.—Born in the county of Durham, 673; at seven, placed in the newly-founded monastery of St. Peter, Wearmouth; at ten, transferred to the associated monastery of St. Paul, Jarrow, five miles distant. Here, during the remainder of his life, in retirement and prayer, he applied himself to the study of Scripture and the advancement of knowledge. In his nineteenth year, he received the orders of deacon; in his thirtieth, those of the priesthood. The dignity of abbot he declined; 'for,' said he, 'the office demands household care, and household care brings with it distraction of mind, which hinders the prosecution of learning.'

To the very last he worked hard, teaching his numerous disciples and compiling in Latin from the venerable Fathers. Death comes and finds him still at work. Under an attack of asthma,

which has long been sapping his strength, he is urging forward an English version of the Gospel of St. John. It is morning on the 27th of May. 'Most dear master,' says one of his pupils, 'there is still one chapter wanting; do you think it troublesome to be asked any more questions?'—'It is no trouble,' he answers; 'take thy pen, and write fast.' At noon, he takes a solemn farewell of his friends, distributing among them treasured spices and other gifts. At sunset the boy says, 'Dear master, there is yet one sentence unwritten.'—'Write it quickly,' bids the dying scholar. 'It is finished now,' says the scribe at last.—'You have spoken truly,' is the reply, 'all is finished. Receive my head into your hands; for it is a great satisfaction to me to sit facing my holy place, where I was wont to pray.' And there on the pavement of his little cell, in the year 735, he falls into his last sleep as his voice reaches the close of the solemn chant, 'Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.'

A tranquil death becomes the man of science or the scholar. The coward dies panic-stricken; the superstitious with visions of terror floating before their fancy: he who has a good conscience and a well-balanced mind, meets death with calmness and hope. Heaven has but 'recalled its own.'

Writings.—The work which immortalizes his name is the *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation* (731), written—like nearly all his works—in Latin. A digest of ancient records, of tradition, and of observation. Though tinged with the credulity of his time, it is based upon inquiries made in the true spirit of a historian,—business-like, yet child-like, practical, and spiritual. It is virtually a history of England brought down to the date of its completion.

At the end of this book, he gives a list of his compositions,—hymns, commentaries, and homilies; text-books for his pupils, throwing together all that the world had then accumulated in astronomy, physics, philosophy, grammar, rhetoric, medicine, and music. Almost the last words that broke from his lips were some English rhymes upon the uncertainties of the grave:

'Before the necessary journey
no one is
wiser of thought
than he hath need,
to consider

before his departure,
what for his spirit
of good or evil
after the death-day
shall be doomed.'

Style.—Artless, succinct, moral, and reflective; clear, and often warm with life.

Rank.—Accomplished in the classics—a rare accomplishment in the West, skilled in the ecclesiastical chant, and master of the whole range of the science of his day. First in the order of time, among English scholars, and first among English historians. The glory of the old English period. The living encyclopædia of his age; superior perhaps (so dark was the intellectual night in the East, as in the West) to any man whom the world then possessed. Yet, withal, a great man of talent, not a great man of genius; a prodigious worker rather than a discoverer; a translator, a commentator, who, amid growing anarchy and gross ignorance, digests and compacts, out of dull, voluminous, or almost inaccessible books, what seems good and useful,—doing for the rest what they are unable to do for themselves.

Character.—Gentle, pure, simple-minded, earnest, and devout. Learning but deepened the lustre of his piety. His soul was a sanctuary lighted up with the lamps of angels, and dedicated to the high service of man and his Maker. By nature a student, his paradise was introspective. ‘My constant pleasure,’ he says, ‘lay in learning, or teaching, or writing.’ In acquiring and communicating, his industry was marvellous. Besides the usual manual labors of the monastery, the duties of the priest, and the occupation of teacher, forty-five treatises remained after his death to attest his habitual activity. All this was done with small aid from others. ‘I am my own secretary,’ he writes; ‘I make my own notes; I am my own librarian.’

Influence.—From his *Ecclesiastical History* we learn nearly all that we know of the Anglo-Saxons and their Church. He is the first figure to which our English science looks back, and the father of English national education. Six hundred monks, besides the strangers that flocked hither for instruction, formed his school of Jarrow; and Northumbria became, for a period, the literary centre of Western Europe. Dissensions and confusion, attending the disintegration of the original political system, will bruise this humble plant, and the wars with the Danes will complete the blight of its promise. Yet will it have, silently, insensibly, a numerous and illustrious progeny. Centuries hence, his

theological and educational works will be held in esteem as authorities and text-books. The light that issues from Jarrow extends to York; Alcuin, by the invitation of Charlemagne, carries it thence to the Continent; French statesmanship and Saxon scholarship go hand in hand to diffuse mediæval civilization; and so, while the fields are wasted by violence, famine, and plague, the Venerable Bede is as a tree planted by the river's side; his branches shall spread, and his beauty be as the olive, and his smell as Lebanon; and what though he dare not speak, they that dwell under his shadow shall return,—they shall revive as the corn and grow as the vine.

ALFRED.

The most perfect character in history. He is a singular instance of a prince who has become a hero of romance, who, as such, has had countless imaginary exploits attributed to him, but to whose character romance has done no more than justice, and who appears in exactly the same light in history and in fable.—*Freeman*.

Biography.—Born at Wantage, 849. Sent to Rome at five, anointed by the Pope, and adopted as his spiritual son; again, two years later, travelling in the train of a king, now at the court of the grandson of Charlemagne, now at the castles of warrior nobles, now with the learned prelates—across the Alps—through the garden of the world—renewing the memories of his childhood amid the ruins, shrines, and palaces of the Eternal City,—what an episode in his young life for observation and thought! Returning, he learns, with the young nobles of Wessex, to run, leap, wrestle, and hunt; illiterate at twelve, and during the period of youth, though a lover of wisdom, without the advantages of special tuition. Marries at twenty, while England is growing dark under the shadow of a tremendous storm; within six weeks, is in arms; at twenty-three, ascends the tottering throne of his fathers, when nine pitched battles have been fought; reduces the pagan leaders to sue humbly for peace, and three months later, in January, is obliged to flee, with a scanty band of followers, into the forest of Selwood. Here, in disguise, in a herdman's hut, by the burning logs on the hearth,

he mends his bow and arrows. The good house-wife confides to his care her baking loaves: but his thought is elsewhere, and they are burning rapidly to cinders. The irate woman, running up to remove them, exclaims:

'Ca'sn thee mind the ke-aks, man, an' doossen zee 'em burn?
I'm bound thee's eat 'em vast enough az zoon az 'tis the turn!'

Near Easter a gleam of good news from the west gladdens the hearts of the wanderers; and in the lengthening days of spring, strong men and true are rallied, for word is abroad that the hero-king is alive; the spirit of the red-handed Dane is broken, and in the resulting fusion of elements are laid the foundations of a better England. The messengers of death are also the messengers of resurrection. There is leisure now for reform, and for upwards of four precious years King Alfred pushes forward the work of internal repair and improvement—material and educational. But in the middle of reforms, while the country is thrilling with awakening life, the war-cloud gathers again, and he prepares to meet another great wave of invasion. The final issue is tried between Christian and Pagan. In three years the Saxon prevails—'Thanks be to God,' says the Chronicle. Thenceforth his reign is devoted to raising the slothful and stolid nation out of the exhaustion in which the life-and-death struggle have left it. Worn out by the constant stress of government and a grievous but unknown complaint, which the physicians ascribed to the spite of the Devil, he died on the 26th of October, 901, in the fifty-second year of his age, closing his eyes on peace at home and abroad. The good die early; the world's hardest workers and noblest benefactors rarely burn to the socket.

Writings.—Chiefly translations into English of the popular manuals of the time, omitting here and expanding there, as might be needful for English use:

Bede's Ecclesiastical History of England. Perhaps reverence for the venerable author caused him to present it without change or addition. It seems likely that his rendering of this work gave the first impulse toward the compilation of the Saxon Chronicle.

Orosius' Universal History, whose scope is thus characteristically summed up by its author—a Spaniard of the fifth century:

'I have now set out by the help of Christ, and in obedience to your desire, O most blessed father Augustine, the lusts and punishments of *sinful* men, the conflicts of the

ages, and the judgments of God, from the beginning of the world to the present time; that is to say, for 5617 years.'

The text—dull enough, though probably the best account of human affairs available to Alfred—is enriched with the new geographical discoveries in the North, including reports of the Northern voyages made by two of his sea-captains. With gossip worthy of Herodotus, we are told:

'Eastland is very large, and there are in it many towns, and in every town a king; and there is also great abundance of honey and fish; and the king and the richest men drink mare's milk, and the poor and the slaves drink mead. They have many contests among themselves; and there is no ale brewed among the Esthonians, for there is mead enough.'

Funerals are postponed by the relatives as long as possible, according to the riches of the deceased; kings and the great lying in state for half a year: for—

'There is a tribe which can produce cold, and so the dead in whom they produce that cold lie very long there and do not putrefy; and if any one sets two vessels full of ale or water, they contrive that one shall be frozen, be it summer or be it winter.'

The living drink and sport, till the day of burial or burning:

'On that day they divide the dead man's property into five or six portions, according to value, and place it out, the largest portion about a mile from the dwelling where the dead man lies, then another, then a third, and so on till it is all laid within the mile. Then all the neighbors within five or six miles who have swift horses, meet and ride towards the property; and he who has the swiftest horse comes to the first and largest portion, and so each after other till the whole is taken; and he takes the least portion who takes that which is nearest the dwelling; and then every one rides away with the property, and they may have it all; and on this account swift horses are there excessively dear.'

Boethius' Consolations of Philosophy, the hand-book of the Middle Ages for the serious. 'A golden book,' says Gibbon, 'not unworthy the leisure of Plato or Tully.' Few books are more striking from the circumstances of their production. It was written in prison, in the dying-swan-like tones of Aurelius. The reflections that consoled the writer in bonds were soon required to support him in the hour of his execution. To him whose soul is his country, a dungeon is the vestibule of Heaven. The mind, shut out from this scene of sensible things, retires into its own infinite domain. In Milton and Bunyan we shall see how wide, when the outer world loses its charms, the inner opens its gates.

The burden of the work is, that a wise God rules the world; that man in his worst extremity possesses much, and ought to fix his thoughts on the imperishable; that God is the chief good,

and works no evil; that, as seen in Eternity, only the good are happy; that God's foreknowledge is reconcilable with the free-will of man. It is a work congenial to Alfred's thinking; for he, like Boethius, has known adversity. Moreover, he would give to his people a system of moral precepts. To do this, he must stoop as to a child; for his audience has never thought or known anything. In this style—asking his readers to pray for him and not to blame him for his imperfect attainments—he renders the refined sentiments and classical allusions of the grand Roman Senator:

'It happened formerly that there was a harper in the country called Thrace, which was in Greece. The harper was inconceivably good. His name was Orpheus. He had a very excellent wife, called Eurydice. Then began men to say concerning the harper, that he could harp so that the wood moved, and the stones stirred themselves at the sound, and wild beasts would run thereto, and stand as if they were tame; so still, that though men or hounds pursued them, they shunned them not. Then said they that the harper's wife should die, and her soul should be led to hell. Then should the harper become so sorrowful that he could not remain among the men, but frequented the wood, and sat on the mountains, both day and night, weeping and harping, so that the woods shook, and the rivers stood still, and no hart shunned any lion, nor hare any hound; nor did cattle know any hatred, or any fear of others, for the pleasure of the sound. Then it seemed to the harper that nothing in this world pleased him. Then thought he that he would seek the gods of hell, and endeavour to allure them with his harp, and pray that they would give him back his wife. When he came thither, then should there come towards him the dog of hell, whose name was Cerberus,—he should have three heads,—and began to wag his tail, and play with him for his harping. Then was there also a very horrible gatekeeper, whose name should be Charon. He had also three heads, and he was very old. Then began the harper to beseech him that he would protect him while he was there, and bring him thence again safe. Then did he promise that to him, because he was desirous of the unaccustomed sound. Then went he further until he met the fierce goddesses, whom the common people call Paræ, of whom they say that they know no respect for any man, but punish every man according to his deeds; and of whom they say that they control every man's fortune. Then began he to implore their mercy. Then began they to weep with him. Then went he farther, and all the inhabitants of hell ran towards him, and led him to their king; and all began to speak with him, and to pray that which he prayed. And the restless wheel which Ixion, the king of the Lapithæ, was bound to for his guilt, that stood still for his harping. And Tantalus the king, who in this world was immoderately greedy, and whom that same vice of greediness followed there, he became quiet. And the vulture should cease, so that he tore not the liver of Tityus the king, which before therewith tormented him. And all the punishments of the inhabitants of hell were suspended whilst he harped before the king. When he long and long had harped, then spoke the king of the inhabitants of hell, and said, "Let us give the man his wife, for he has earned her by his harping." He then commanded him that he should well observe that he never looked backwards after he departed thence; and said if he looked backwards, that he should lose the woman. But men can with great difficulty, if at all, restrain love! Wellaway! What! Orpheus then led his wife with him till he came to the boundary of light and darkness. Then went his wife after him. When he came forth into the light, then looked he behind his back towards the woman. Then was she immediately lost to him. This fable teaches every man who desires to fly the darkness of hell, and to come to the light of true good, that he look not about him to his old vices, so that he practise them again as fully as he did before. For whosoever with full

will turns his mind to the vices which he had before forsaken, and practises them, and they then fully please him, and he never thinks of forsaking them; then loses he all his former good unless he again amend it.'

Gregory, on the Cure of the Soul, which seemed to Alfred a most suitable manual for the clergy in their lethargic state. It is in the preface to this work that he tells us of the sad decay of learning in his kingdom, and of his desire for its true restoration:

'I wish you to know that it often occurs to my mind to consider what manner of wise men there were formerly in the English nation, both spiritual and temporal, and how happy the times then were among the English, and how well the kings behaved in their domestic government, and how they prospered in knowledge and wisdom. I considered also how earnest God's ministers then were, as well about preaching as about learning, and men came from foreign countries to seek wisdom and doctrine in this land, and how we, who live in these times, are obliged to go abroad to get them. To so low a depth has learning fallen among the English nation, that there have been very few on this side of the Humber, who were able to understand the English of their service, or to turn an epistle out of Latin into English; and I know there were not many beyond the Humber who could do it. There were so few, that I cannot think of one on the south side of the Thames when I first began to reign. God Almighty be thanked that we have always a teacher in the pulpit now. . . . When I thought of all this, I fancied also that I saw (before everything was ravaged and burned) how all the churches throughout the English nation stood full of books, though at that time they gathered very little fruit from their books, not being able to understand them, because they were not written in their own language. For which reason I think it best, if you too think so, that we should turn into the language, which we all of us know, some such books as are deemed most useful for all men to understand. . . . When I reflected how this learning of the Latin tongue had fallen throughout the English nation, though many knew how to read English writing, I then began in the midst of divers and manifold affairs of this kingdom, to turn into Anglo-Saxon this book, which in Latin is named *Pastoralis*, and in Anglo-Saxon the *Herdsmen's Book*; and I will send one of them to every bishop's see in my kingdom.'

Proverbs, compiled in the reign of Henry II, and hence in the broken dialect of the transition period. They mirror a wise and benevolent spirit. The scholar and the man outshine the king. We know him better and honor him more when we read from his own lips:

'The right nobility is in the mind, not in the flesh.'

'Power is never a good unless he be good that has it; and that is the good of the man, not of the power.'

'Learn therefore wisdom; and when you have learned it, do not neglect it. I tell you then, without any doubt, that by it you may come to power, though you should not desire the power.'

In almost the last of the series, he addresses his son:

'My dear son, set thee now beside me, and I will deliver thee true instructions. My son, I feel that my hour is coming. My countenance is wan. My days are almost done. We must now part. I shall go to another world, and thou shalt be left alone in all my wealth. I pray thee (for thou art my dear child), strive to be a father and a lord to thy people; be thou the children's father and the widow's friend; comfort thou the poor and shelter the weak; and with all thy might, right that which is wrong. And, son, govern thyself by law; then shall the Lord love thee, and God above all things shall be

thy reward. Call thou upon Him to advise thee in all thy need, and so He shall help thee the better to compass that which thou wishest.'

Some truths and precepts are like diamonds, which may be set a hundred times in as many generations without loss of beauty or of lustre.

Style.—Artless, earnest, but sober; abrupt, yet long drawn out; practical and moral, like the man; idiomatic in vocabulary and arrangement, showing a strong repugnance to the importation of foreign words, a quality certainly due in part to his object—the instruction of a barbarous audience.

Character.—Tradition tells of his genial good-nature, his love of song, his eager desire for knowledge and the improvement of society. His words, and the books selected as the objects of his chief efforts, indicate strongly the union of zeal with moderation, of practical judgment with serious and elevated sentiment, of untiring industry with eminent piety. How or when he learned to read or write, we know not. Asser, his contemporary, says:

'His noble nature implanted in him from his cradle a love of wisdom above all things; but, with shame be it spoken, by the unworthy neglect of his parents and nurses, he remained illiterate even till he was twelve years old or more; but he listened with serious attention to the Saxon poems which he often heard recited, and easily retained them in his docile memory.'

And again:

'This he confessed, with many lamentations and sighs, to have been one of his greatest difficulties and impediments in this life, namely, that when he was young and had the capacity for learning, he could not find teachers.'

Careful of detail and methodical, he carries in his bosom a notebook in which he jots down things as they strike him; now a prayer, now a story, now an event, now an image. Asser, instructed to write in it a passage which he has just read to the king, says:

'But I could not find any empty space in that book wherein to write the quotation, for it was already full of various matters.'

Four priests read to him whenever he has leisure, Asser among the number:

'I read to him whatever books he liked, and such as he had at hand; for this is his usual custom, both night and day, amid his many other occupations of mind and body, either himself to read books, or to listen whilst others read them.'

But there is a God in this universe, and a God's sanction, with which a nation may not dispense without peril, nor a man without

decay of the heart and dimming of the eye. Without a realized sense of the divine, the intellect can have no clear vision on moral mountains, nor the national character become great, firm and glorious. A lost faith or an indifferent faith is fatal to all high ideal. Alfred has neither. The strong moral bent of his mind is seen in some of the novelties of his legislation. He believes there is an order from everlasting, and declares it as he understands it, without balancing expediencies or plausibilities. His 'Dooms,' accordingly, are an almost literal transcript of the Decalogue, with selections from the Mosaic code; as,—

'These are the dooms that thou shalt set them:—If any one buy a Christian bondsman, be he bondsman to him six years, the seventh be he free unbought. With such clothes as he went in, with such go he out. If he himself have a wife, go she out with him. If, however, the lord gave him a wife, go she and her bairn the lord's. If then the bondsman say, I will not go from my lord, nor from my wife, nor from my bairn, nor from my goods, let then his lord bring him to the church door, and drill through his ear with an awl, to witness that he be ever thenceforth a bondsman.'¹

Amid the cares of state, racked by almost ceaseless pain, he finds time for daily religious services:

'Because he feared the anger of God, if he should do anything contrary to his will, he used often to rise in the morning at the cock-crow, and go to pray in the churches and at the relics of the saints.'

He consecrates to God the half of his possible services, bodily and mental. To prove his sincerity, he contrives a time-piece for the more exact measurement of the hours, since at night on account of the darkness, and frequently at day on account of the clouds, he cannot always accurately estimate them. He has six candles made, of equal length, each with twelve divisions or rings. Lighted in succession, they burn a night and a day:

'But sometimes when they would not continue burning a whole day and night, till the same hour that they were lighted the preceding evening, from the violence of the wind, which blew day and night without intermission through the doors and windows of the churches, the fissures of the divisions, the plankings, or the wall, or the thin canvas of the tents, they then unavoidably burned out and finished their course before the appointed time; the king therefore considered by what means he might shut out the wind, and so by a useful and cunning invention, he ordered a lantern to be beautifully constructed of wood and white ox-horn, which when skilfully planed till it is thin, is no less transparent than a vessel of glass.'

Though simple and kindly in temper, he is a stern inquisitor in executing justice. He has twenty-four officers hung for corruption in the judgment-seat.

Affable and liberal, patient, brave, just, and temperate, with a

¹ See Exodus *xxi*, 1-6.

clear conscience he may testify: 'This I can now truly say, that so long as I have lived I have striven to live worthily, and after my death to leave my memory to my descendants in good works.'

Rank.—Without the genius to invent and originate, he had the talent to adapt means to ends, to develop and improve the old, to think what the many think and cannot yet say. A great gift, no doubt. It is men of great talent who occupy the headlands of society. In politics, in war, in letters, Alfred simply takes what is nearest and makes the best of it. As an author, he is like Bede, a teacher of semi-barbarians, who tries not to create but to compile, to pick out and explain from Greek and Latin stories something which may suit the people of his age; as a father who draws his little boy between his knees, and with much pains relates a fairy tale or makes an idea clear by visible and tangible things.

There is no evidence of the imaginative qualities which mark the higher statesman. His sphere of action, indeed, was too narrow to justify his comparison, politically or intellectually, with the immortal few. What really lifts him to their level is the moral grandeur of his life. Nay, his altitude is the greater in proportion as wisdom is above knowledge, and goodness above genius, or spiritual growth above mental culture. Among recorded rulers he is unique. What other has possessed so many virtues with so little alloy? A soldier, a statesman, a law-giver, a lover of learning, and an author of repute; a prince without personal ambition, all whose wars were fought in his country's defense, who bore adversity with noble fortitude and wore his laurels in noble simplicity, steering the ship of state, with a turbulent crew, through a stormy sea,—there is none like him. Of no other will it ever be said that he is 'England's darling.'

Influence.—Solicitous of his own enlightenment, he never forgot that his first duty was to his people. He educated himself (nearly forty before he acquired an imperfect acquaintance with Latin) that he might educate them. He rebuilt monasteries, and made them educational centres; superintended a school in his own palace, sent abroad for instructors, and desired that every free-born youth who possessed the means should 'abide at his book till he well understand English writing'; had skilled

mechanics brought from the Continent, who built houses, says Asser, 'majestic and good beyond all the precedents of his ancestors.' His legislation left imperishable traces upon England. In his court, at his impulse, perchance in his very words, English history begins.¹ True the light will wane and flicker. The flood of national calamity, rising ominously during his life, shall seem to sweep utterly away the ripening harvest of Saxon civilization; but force is indestructible; and that spirit of moral strength, felt afar off, lives still beneath the sun, as seed springs from seed. The oak dies, but the acorn lives. Each moral world is related to many others. The novels of Scott produce the historical works of Guizot and Thiers; the voice of Demosthenes, though it has long since died away over his native shores, heaves many a living breast; and the heart of Paul, whose head was claimed by Nero long ago, beats sacred music in a thousand pulpits.

ROGER BACON.

Χαίρετε Κήρυκες Διὸς ἄγγελοι ἡδὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν.

Hail, Heralds, messengers of God and men!—*Homer.*

Biography.—Born in the county of Somerset, 1214, of a wealthy family, which had been driven into exile and reduced to poverty by the civil wars. Studied at Oxford, then at Paris, as was at that time the custom of learned Englishmen, and there received the degree of Doctor of Divinity. His whole heritage was spent in costly studies and experiments. Soon after his return home, withdrawing from the civil strife fermenting between the baronage and the Crown, he became a mendicant friar of the order of St. Francis, and settled at Oxford, devoting himself to study with extraordinary fervor, notwithstanding the discipline of the Franciscans, who looked upon books and study as hinderances to their appointed mission of preaching among the masses of the poor. Physics seems to have been the chief object of his labors, and liberal friends of science supplied him with means for pursuing his researches. His spreading fame

¹ That is, English history expressed in the *vernacular*.

was mingled with suspicions of his dealings in magic; and the prejudice of the ignorant was encouraged by the jealousy of his superiors and brethren. An accusation was brought against him at the Papal court, and he was interdicted from teaching in the university. For ten years he was under constant supervision, forbidden to publish anything under pain of forfeiture of the book and penance of bread and water. The pope, who had heard of his rare acquirements, requested him to write. Friends raised the necessary money by pawning their goods, upon the understanding that their loan should be made known to the Holy See. Within fifteen months, despite all obstacles, three large treatises¹ were dispatched to Rome, 'on account of the danger of roads and the possible loss of the work,' by a youth who had been trained and educated with great care by Bacon himself. In 1278, a vehement reformer ere the current of opinion had turned against former establishments, he was thrown into prison, where he remained fourteen years. In 1294, when his life had almost covered the thirteenth century, the old man died, having endured the obloquy of all revolutionists who are not themselves creatures of the revolution.

Writings.—His monumental work is the *Opus Majus* (1267). It is divided into six parts:

Part I treats of the sources of error and causes of ignorance,—authority, custom, popular opinion, and ostentatious pride. Like a careful and ambitious builder, filled with a new grand idea of nature and life, he lays a sure foundation for the vast superstructure which his plan embraces. Without certain practical conditions, a speculative knowledge of the most perfect method of procedure remains barren and unapplied. Bacon the Friar proves his kinship with the great lights of the world by his precepts, similar to theirs, on the disposition proper to philosophy. Before him, Socrates had said: 'To attain to a knowledge of ourselves we must banish prejudice, passion and sloth.' Bacon the Chancellor was yet to say: 'If the human intellect hath once taken a liking to any doctrine, either because received and credited, or because otherwise pleasing,—it draws everything

¹ *Opus Majus*, *Opus Minus*, and *Opus Tertium*; or, *The Greater Work*, *The Less Work*, and *The Third Work*. The *Minus* is little more than a summary of the *Majus*, and the *Tertium* an appendix to it; both still exist unpublished in the Cottonian and other libraries.

else into harmony with that doctrine and to its support.' And Sir W. Raleigh: 'It is opinion, not truth, that travelleth the world without passport.' 'Opinion,' says the great Pascal, 'disposes of all things. It constitutes beauty, justice, happiness.' And the pious Charon: 'Almost every opinion we have, we have but by authority; we believe, judge, act, live, and die on trust; a common custom teaches us.' Vanity, self-love, traditional habit, the prestige of a great name, are powerful impediments to a progress in knowledge. Unless we can cast off the prejudices of the man and become as little children, docile and unperverted, we need never hope to enter the temple of science. Let us not follow the philosophers of antiquity with a too profound deference. They, and especially Aristotle, are not infallible. 'We find their books,' says Bacon, 'full of doubts, obscurities, and perplexities. They scarce agree with each other in one empty question or one worthless sophism, or one operation of science, as one man agrees with another in the practical operations of medicine, surgery, and the like arts of secular men.' 'Indeed,' he adds, 'not only the philosophers, but the saints have fallen into errors which they have afterwards retracted.'

Part II treats of the relation between philosophy and theology. All true wisdom is contained in the Scriptures; and the true end of philosophy is to rise from an imperfect knowledge of created things to a knowledge of the Creator. The brilliant results achieved by the ancients, who had not the Word, must have been inspired by a direct illumination from God.

Part III treats of the utility of Grammar. The necessity of a true linguistic science was strongly impressed upon him by the current translations of philosophical writings, which were very bad. This it was which moved him to say, somewhat impatiently:

'If I had power over the works of Aristotle, I would have them all burnt; for it is only a loss of time to study in them, and a course of error, and a multiplication of ignorance beyond expression.'

And again,—

'The common herd of students, with their heads, have no principle by which they can be excited to any worthy employment; and hence they mope and make asses of themselves over their bad translations, and lose their time, and trouble, and money.'

A good translator, he wisely insists, should know thoroughly (1) the language from which he is translating, (2) the language

into which he is translating, and (3) the subject of which the book treats.

Part IV treats of the utility of mathematics. All science, of things human and divine, rests ultimately on them. Here only can we entirely avoid doubt and error, and obtain certainty and truth:

‘Moreover, there have been found famous men, as Robert, bishop of Lincoln, and Brother Adam Marshman, and many others who by the power of mathematics have been able to explain the causes of things; as may be seen in the writings of these men, for instance, concerning the Rainbow and Comets, and the generation of heat and climates, and the celestial bodies.’

Mathematics is the ‘alphabet of philosophy,’ the door and key to all sciences:

‘The neglect of it for nearly thirty or forty years hath nearly destroyed the entire studies of Latin Christendom. For he who knows not mathematics cannot know any other sciences; and, what is more, he cannot discover his own ignorance or find its proper remedies.’

Part V treats of perspective. This is the part on which the author most prided himself. He opens with an able sketch of psychology, next describes the anatomy of the eye, touches upon other points of physiological optics,—in general erroneously, then discusses very fully the laws of reflection and refraction, and the construction of mirrors and lenses.

Part VI, the most remarkable portion of the *Opus Majus*, treats of experimental science. Real knowledge consists in the union of exact conceptions with certain facts. The foundation is experience; but experience is of two sorts,—external and internal. The first is usually called experiment, but it can give no complete knowledge even of matter, much less of spirit. The second is intuitive and divine. Of the supernatural enlightenment there are seven grades. Experimental science has three great *Prerogatives* over all the other sciences: 1. It verifies their conclusions; as in the Rainbow, whose colors are produced in the drops dashed from oars in the sunshine, in the spray thrown by a mill-wheel, in the dew of a summer morning, and in many other ways. 2. It discovers truths which they could never reach. Thus (1) the construction of an artificial sphere which shall move with the heavens by natural influences. Or (2) the art of prolonging life, which experiment may teach, though medicine can do little except by regimen. Of a preparation here mentioned,

one of the ingredients is the flesh of a dragon, used as food by the Ethiopians, we are told, and prepared as follows:

‘Where there are good flying dragons, by the art which they possess, they draw them out of their dens, and have bridles and saddles in readiness, and they ride upon them, and make them bound about in the air in a violent manner, that the hardness and toughness of the flesh may be reduced, as boars are hunted and bulls are baited before they are killed for eating.’

Or (3) the art of making gold finer than fine gold, which transcends the power of alchemy. 3. It investigates the secrets of nature. Here we find the suggestion that the fire-works made by children, of saltpetre, might lead to the invention of a formidable weapon of war; that character may be changed by changing the air. When Alexander applied to Aristotle to know whether he should exterminate certain tribes which he had discovered, as being irreclaimably barbarous, the philosopher replied: ‘If you can alter their air, permit them to live; if not, put them to death.’

Hence, it appears, the leading purpose of the *Opus Majus* is the progress of knowledge, and, to this end, the reform of scientific method. A wonderful work, if we but consider the circumstances of its origin, alike wonderful in plan and in detail,—the encyclopædia of the classic century of scholasticism.

Style.—Plain, methodical, clear, animated, energetic; as of a large, earnest soul profoundly penetrated with the vastness of its mission and the brevity of its opportunity.

Rank.—A giant among his contemporaries, standing out in picturesque and impressive contrast. To them he was a wonder, and they styled him, ‘*Doctor Mirabilis*.’ As a student at Paris, he mastered Latin, Greek, and Hebrew,—an accomplishment which not more than five men in England then possessed. The story was current that he had discovered a receipt for teaching any one ‘in a very few days Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Arabic.’ His works, full of sound and exact knowledge, cover the whole range of science and philosophy,—Mathematics, Mechanics, Optics, Astronomy, Geography, Chronology, Chemistry, Magic, Music, Medicine, Grammar, Logic, Metaphysics, Ethics, and Theology. He stood upon a lofty eminence, and looked forward three centuries when his dreams were to take substantial form. He gave a receipt for making gunpowder, learned perhaps from the Arabs,—saltpetre, charcoal, and sulphur. Afterwards it was

told how the fiend, to whom the heretical wizard sold himself, carried away his victim in a whirlwind of fire. He knew that there were different kinds of gas, or *air* as he calls it, and tells us that one of these puts out a flame. He invented the school-boy's favorite experiment of burning a candle under a bell-glass to prove that when the air is exhausted the candle goes out. He predicts that one day ships will go on the water without sails, and carriages run on the roads without horses, and that travellers will use flying machines. He constructed lenses, burning glasses, and knew the theory of the telescope if he did not make one. He says:

'We can place transparent bodies (that is, glasses) in such a form and position between our eyes and other objects that the rays shall be refracted and bent towards any place we please, so that we shall see the object near at hand, or at a distance, under any angle we please; and thus from an incredible distance we may read the smallest letter, and may number the smallest particles of sand, by reason of the greatness of the angle under which they appear.'

To-day, however high the philosopher may rise above the multitude, his elevation is seen to be the reward of energy and labor. But in Bacon's time, men's thoughts were less clear, they could catch no glimpse of the intervening path; and when they saw him above them, but knew not how he was raised and supported, he became to them an object of suspicion and terror—a magician,—and feelings of envy probably induced the few tacitly to sanction the opinion of the many. Thus, the *Famous History of Fryer Bacon*, compiled in the sixteenth century, represents him before the king and queen in the act of displaying his skill in the black art. He waves his wand, and entrancing music is heard; waves it once more, and five dancers enter, who dance, and vanish in the order of their coming; waves it again, and a table laden with choicest viands is spread before them; yet again, and again, while the room fills with richest perfumes and the liveries of sundry nations pass and fade. He makes a Brazen Head, by which, 'if he could make this head to speake (and heare it when it speakes), then might hee be able to wall all England about with brasse.' From a high hill, with his 'mathematical glasses' he fires the public buildings of a besieged town, and amid the uproar gives the signal for the king's assault:

'Thus through the art of this learned man the king got this strong towne, which hee could not doe with all his men without Fryer Bacon's helpe.'

A keen and systematic thinker who, without being completely dissevered from his national antecedents and surrounding, seeks to divert into other and profitable channels that subtlety of the schoolmen which was growing forests of erudition without fruit. In this he is an accurate representative of the English mind on one of its most striking sides, and the forerunner of his greater namesake, who will exhibit the same fondness for experiment, the same preference of inductive to abstract reasoning. The *Opus Majus* is the prototype, in spirit, of Lord Bacon's *Novum Organum*.

Character.—His keen thirst for knowledge, his patience, his energy, appear forcibly in words like these:

‘From my youth up, I have labored at the sciences and tongues. I have sought the friendship of all men among the Latins who had any reputation for knowledge. I have caused youths to be instructed in languages, geometry, arithmetic, the construction of tables and instruments, and many needful things besides.’

Again:

‘During the twenty years that I have especially labored in the attainment of wisdom, abandoning the path of common men, I have spent on these pursuits more than two thousand pounds, not to mention the cost of books, experiments, instruments, tables, the acquisition of languages, and the like. Add to all this the sacrifices I have made to procure the friendship of the wise, and to obtain well instructed assistants.’

Of the difficulties in the way of such studies as he had resolved to pursue:

‘Without mathematical instruments no science can be mastered, and these instruments are not to be found among the Latins, and could not be made for two or three hundred pounds. Besides, better tables are indispensably necessary, tables on which the motions of the heavens are certified from the beginning to the end of the world without daily labor; but these tables are worth a king's ransom, and could not be made without a vast expense. I have often attempted the composition of such tables, but could not finish them through failure of means and the folly of those whom I had to employ.’

As a teacher, he was devoted to those whom he taught. Of the boy sent to Rome, he writes to the pope:

‘When he came to me as a poor boy, I caused him to be nurtured and instructed for the love of God, especially since for aptitude and innocence I have never found so towardly a youth. Five or six years ago I caused him to be taught in languages, mathematics, and optics, and I have gratuitously instructed him with my own lips since the time that I received your mandate. There is no one at Paris who knows so much of the root of philosophy, though he has not produced the branches, flowers, and fruit because of his youth, and because he has had no experience in teaching. But he has the means of surpassing all the Latins if he live to grow old and goes on as he has begun.’

Neither his confidence in the power of the human intellect nor his devotion to physical studies materialized his faith or abated his humility. Wisely he says:

‘Man is incapable of perfect wisdom in this life; it is hard for him to ascend towards perfection, easy to glide downwards to falsehoods and vanities: let him then not boast of his wisdom or extol his knowledge. What he knows is little and worthless, in respect of that which he believes without knowing; and still less, in respect of that which he is ignorant of. He is mad who thinks highly of his wisdom; he most mad, who exhibits it as something to be wondered at.’

Popular legend, which transforms him into a powerful conjurer, always represents him to have been a beneficent one, courageous and modest.

Influence.—Upon his own age not great. The seed he let drop, fell for the most part on a barren soil. The master-conception was itself drying up. Science was extinguished in idle raving and inanity. Bacon himself says:

‘Never was there so great an appearance of wisdom nor so much exercise of study in so many Faculties, in so many regions, as for this last forty years. Doctors are dispersed everywhere, in every castle, in every burgh, and especially by the students of two Orders, which has not happened except for about forty years. And yet there was never so much ignorance, so much error.’

He sought, in opposition to the spirit of his times, to divert the interest of his contemporaries from scholastic subtleties to the study of nature, and gained from his own Order a prison. To us he has left a treasure of the most solid knowledge of his century, of worthy and wise speculations. He is, moreover, an interesting and instructive example of real greatness born before its time, uttering its thoughts in Golgotha, standing alone on heights unknown, and by its very isolation forming no school and leaving no disciples.

INITIATIVE PERIOD.

CHAPTER IV.

FEATURES.

If there be any such thing as a philosophy of history, real or possible, it is in virtue of there being certain progressive organizing laws in which the fretful lives of each of us are gathered into and subordinated in some larger unity, through which age is linked to age, as we move forward, with an horizon expanding and advancing.—*Froude*.

Politics.—The chief object of the English was to establish, by force of arms, a continental empire. The greatest victories of the Middle Ages were gained at this time against great odds by the English armies. A French king was brought captive to London, an English one was crowned at Paris. But after a long and bloody struggle, with many bitter regrets the contest was abandoned, and from that hour no British government has seriously and steadily pursued the dream of great conquests on the Continent.

Confined within the limits of the island, the warlike people employed in civil strife those arms which had carried terror beyond the Pyrenees and the Alps. The barons, ceasing to plunder the French, were by the force of habit, eager to plunder one another. Ireland and Scotland, subjugated by the Plantagenets, were impatient under the yoke. The former had never, since the days of Henry II, been able to expel the foreign invaders. The latter, as we have seen, vindicated her independence under the wise and valiant Bruce. Both were far behind England in wealth and civilization.

Kings overstepped the constitutional line. They possessed many lucrative and formidable rights which enabled them to punish any who thwarted them, and to reward any who enjoyed their favor. Persons obnoxious to the government were frequently imprisoned merely by the mandate of the sovereign. Taxes were imposed without the assent of the estates of the

realm. Penalties fixed by statute were remitted. But these incursions were strenuously withstood. Three ancient and potent principles bounded persistently the royal prerogative and protected the liberties of the nation: 1. The king could not legislate without the consent of parliament. 2. Nor without this consent could he impose a tax. 3. He was bound to conduct the administration according to law, and if the law was infringed his advisers were answerable. These fundamental rules, by their natural development, will produce the order of things under which we now live.

Though the struggles with regard to the authority of the Great Charter were over, and the king was acknowledged to lie under some obligations; yet the government, on the whole, was only a barbarous monarchy, neither regulated by fixed maxims nor bounded by undisputed rights. It was a composite of opposite systems, each prevailing in its turn according to the favor of incidents,—royalty, aristocracy, priesthood, and commonalty.

The weakness of the second Edward gave reins to that licentiousness of the grandes which the vigor of his father had repressed; and the hopes that rose with his accession were blasted amid the traitorous conspiracies and public disorders that accomplished and attended his deposition. The reign of Edward III, as it was one of the longest in the annals of the nation, was also one of the most glorious,—if by glory are meant foreign victories, and comparative domestic peace in an age of violence and outrage. Parliament rose into greater consideration. The House of Commons, naturally depressed during factious periods by the greater power of the crown and barons, began to appear of some weight in the constitution. The reign of Richard II began in tranquillity and went out in furious convulsions,—less from neglect of national privileges than from want of power to overawe his barons.

Society.—The amalgamation of conquered and conquerors was complete. The original ground of quarrel was lost to view. The constitution of the House of Commons promoted a salutary intermixture of classes. Between the aristocracy and working people was springing up a middle class, agricultural and commercial. The knight was the connecting link between the baron

and the shopkeeper. No longer rich enough to assist at the royal assemblies, community of interests, similarity of manners, nearness of condition, lead him to coalesce with the yeomen, who take him for their representative, elect him. The laborious, courageous body that supplies the energy of the nation, they value themselves, equally with the grandee, as of a race born to victory and dominion.

The ordinary dwelling consisted of two rooms,—the *hall* for living and miscellaneous use, and the *bower*, or chamber, for sleeping and privacy. The use of chimneys is distinctly mentioned, though rarely. The fire was usually in the middle of the floor; and the smoke, if it pleased, took its course through a hole in the roof. Hence Chaucer of the ‘poure wydow’:

‘Ful sooty was hir bour, and eek hire halle,
In which she eet ful many a sclender meel.’

The house, as among the low Irish and Italians yet, was shared with the cattle and poultry. Thus of the rooster:

‘As Chauntecleer among his wyves alle
Sat on his perche, that was in the halle.’

The walls, as well as the floor, were commonly bare, without even plaster. Plates there were none. *Trenchers*—large flat cakes of bread—were used instead. When the meat was eaten off them, they were given to the poor; for, being saturated with the gravy, they were too valuable to be thrown away. No morsel was held in dainty contemplation at a fork’s end. They helped themselves from the common dish, and ate with their fingers. One cup for drinking passed from guest to guest, and courtesy required to wipe the mouth on the sleeve before drinking, and not spit on the table. Pretty and agreeable were the accomplishments of the prioress:

‘At mete was she wel ytaughte withalle;
She lette no morsel from hire lippes falle,
Ne wette hire fingres in hire sauce depe.
Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe,
Thatte no drope ne fell upon hire brest.’

The tournament, or mock-fighting, was the favorite sport, the highest enjoyment and the noblest accomplishment of all ranks. In horse-racing and bull-baiting, high and low took equal interest. The great pastime of the lower orders was archery, which they were bound by royal proclamation to practice on Sundays

and holidays after Divine service. Upon these occasions, other amusements, such as quoits, cock-fighting, foot-ball, hand-ball, were forbidden.

High life was a pageant, a brilliant and tumultuous kind of fête. Immediately after the Crusades we find nearly all Europe rushing with long-sustained violence into habits of luxury. In England, the gallantry of France, the gorgeousness of the East, contributed to the movement. One of its first signs was an extraordinary richness of dress. A parliament of Edward III passed no less than eight laws against French fashions. The king and the court set the example, and their splendor was as barbarous as their manners. Richard's dress was stiff with gold and gems. Cloaks of damask or satin trailed in the filth of the streets, and excited the rage of the satirists. Beards were long and curled, the hair was tied in a tail behind. Shoes were covered with designs borrowed from the stained glass windows of Westminster, and the long pointed toe, reaching to the knee, was there bound by a gold or silver clasp. Gay gowns of green were common, and an unknown author complains that the women could not be distinguished from the men. The most striking part of female attire was a towering head-dress like a mitre, some two feet high, from which floated a rainbow of ribbons. The extravagance was infectious, and the servant aped the manners of the aristocrat. The chief clauses of a statute of 1363 are intended to restrain 'the outrageous and excessive apparel of divers people against their estate and degree.'

But luxurious indulgence was not confined to apparel. It is displayed in the architecture of the period—the decorated Gothic,—of which pointed arches and profuse ornament are the distinctive features. 'Its whole aim was continually to climb higher, to clothe the sacred edifice with a gaudy bedizenment, as if it were a bride on the wedding morning.' At the marriage of Richard Plantagenet, thirty thousand dishes were provided. In 1399, the royal household comprised ten thousand persons, three hundred of whom were in the kitchen. Excess in eating and drinking is hereditary. It is in harmony with the genius of Germanic peoples to drink in doing everything.

They asked for adventure, adornment, pleasure. Edward III, in an expedition against the king of France, took with him thirty

falconers, and alternately hunted and fought. Knights carried a plaster over one eye, pledged not to remove it till they had performed an exploit worthy of their mistresses; for the sense of love—without depth and reality of nobleness—was not idle. Tournaments, introduced by Edward I, were plentiful, and the precepts of the love courts were punctiliously performed. In one of the London tournaments of Edward III, sixty ladies, seated on palfreys, led each her knight by a golden chain. Minstrelsy and tales of glee, the chase with hawks and hounds, brilliant charges, ‘the love of ladies,’ bestowal of the silken scarf by fair maiden upon brave victor, a racket of contests, a confusion of magnificence,—form the romance of this regal and noble life, the flower of the Romanesque civilization.

But under this bloom of chivalry are fierce and unbridled instincts: bleeding steeds and gasping knights, plunderings and death-wounds,—all the horrors expressed in ‘burned’—‘robbed’—‘wasted’—‘pillaged’—‘slain’—‘beheaded.’ The Earl of Winchester, at ninety, without trial or accusation, is condemned to death by rebellious barons, gibbeted, his body cut in pieces and thrown to the dogs, and his head exposed on a pole to the insults of the populace. Edward II causes twenty-eight nobles to be disembowelled, and is himself dispatched by the insertion of a red-hot iron into his bowels. Men openly associate themselves, for mutual defense, under the patronage of nobles, wear public badges to distinguish their confederacy, meet in troops like armies, and support each other in every iniquity. On the coat of arms of one of these marauders was the inscription: ‘I am Captain Warner, commander of a troop of robbers, an enemy to God, without pity and without mercy.’ Two cardinals themselves, the pope’s legates, are thus despoiled of their goods and equipage; the poet Chaucer is twice robbed; and the king of Cyprus on a visit to England is stripped, with his whole retinue. Highway robbery is a national crime; and capital punishment, though frequent, cannot restrain a bold and licentious crew, made tolerably secure by the general want of communication and the advantage of extensive forests. The outlaws of Sherwood—allowed to redeem a just ignominy by a few acts of generosity—are the heroes of vulgar applause. What shall be said of the female character or of the tyranny of husbands, when we find it to be no

uncommon circumstance that women are strangled by masked assassins, or, walking by the river-side, are plunged into it? Ran a popular proverb: 'It is nothing,—only a woman being drowned.'

A social chasm severed the rich from the poor. At first, as we have seen, the tiller of the soil was his lord's property. Custom gradually secured to each serf his little hut and garden-plot, and limited the amount of service he had to render. This done—personally or by deputy,—his remaining hours were free. If by additional labor he acquired cattle, he was permitted to pasture them upon the waste lands of his lord's estate. If unable to find employment in tillage, he was allowed to pay a money-rent. Manumissions were sold to refill the royal and baronial purse drained by incessant campaigns. Labor—no longer bound to one spot or one master—was free to hire itself where and to whom it would. A statute of the period complains that—

'Villains and tenants of lands in villinage withdrew their customs and services from their lords, having attached themselves to other persons who maintained and abetted them; and who, under color of exemplifications from Domesday of the manors and villas where they dwelt, claimed to be quit of all manner of services, either of their body or of their lands, and would suffer no distress or other course of justice to be taken against them; the villains aiding their maintainers by threatening the officers of their lords with peril of life and limb, as well by open assemblies as by confederacies to support each other.'

Now for the first time is revealed the strife between capital and labor; and the struggle is now hushed, then intensified by that destroying blast which rising in the East, and sweeping across the shore of the Mediterranean and Baltic, swooped at the close of 1348 upon Britain.

Harvests rotted, lands were left untilled, cattle strayed through the fields and corn, or poisoned the air with their decaying carcasses, grass grew in towns, villages were left without a single inhabitant, half the population perished. Individuals thought only of their own safety, the rich were rendered more oppressive, the licentious more abandoned; the laborer and artisan—masters at last of the labor market—demanded exorbitant wages, and turned easily into the 'sturdy beggar' or the bandit of the woods. Ran a royal ordinance:

'Every man or woman of whatsoever condition, free or bond, able in body, and within the age of three-score years, . . . and not having of his own whereof he may live, nor land of his own about the tillage of which he may occupy himself, and not

serving any other, shall be bound to serve the employer who shall require him to do so, and shall take only the wages which were accustomed to be taken in the neighborhood where he is bound to serve.'

Not only was the price of labor fixed by act of parliament, but the labor class was once more tied to the soil. The laborer was forbidden to quit his own parish, and a refusal to obey was punished by imprisonment. The process of emancipation was checked. The ingenuity of lawyers was shamelessly exercised in cancelling on grounds of informality manumissions and exemptions, to bring back into bondage the villains and serfs who had delighted in their freedom. Discontent smouldered and spread. A 'mad priest' gave terrible utterance to the tyranny of property and the defiance of socialism. Cried the preacher:

'Good people, things will never go well in England so long as goods be not in common, and so long as there be villains and gentlemen. By what right are they whom we call lords greater folk than we? Why do they hold us in serfage? They are clothed in velvet, and warm in their furs, while we are covered with rags. They have wine and spices and fair bread, and we oat-cake and straw, and water to drink. They have leisure and fine houses; we have pain and labor, the rain and the wind in the fields. And yet it is of us and our toil that these men hold their state. When Adam dived and Eve span, where was then the gentleman?'

The insolence of the tax-gatherers fanned the scattered sparks of sedition into flame from sea to sea. Quaint rhymes served as call to arms; as,—

'John Ball greeteth you all, and doth for to understand he hath rung your bell. Now right and might, will and skill, God speed every dele.'

And,—

'Falseness and guile have reigned too long, and truth hath been set under a lock, and falseness and guile reigneth in every stock.'

The revolt, indeed, was outwardly suppressed, and happily so; but Tyler the smith and Ball the priest had sounded the knell of feudalism and the declaration of the equal rights of men. 'We will that you free us forever,' shouted the insurgents to the youthful Richard.

The struggle went on. The terror of the land-owners expressed itself in legislation, to which the stubbornness of resistance shows the temper of the people. Says a statute of 1385:

'Divers villains and neifs, as well of great lords as of other people, spiritual and temporal, do flee unto cities, towns, and places enfranchised, as the city of London, and feign divers suits against their lords, to the intent to make them free by answer of their lords.'

Serfdom, by the operation of moral causes, is dying out. The word 'villen' gives place to the word 'servant.' In 1388, wages

are again regulated, because 'servant and laborers will not serve and labor without outrageous and excessive hire.' In the same year it is harshly enacted that no servant or laborer can depart, even at the expiration of his service, from the hundred in which he lives, without permission under the king's seal; nor may any who have been bred to husbandry till twelve years old exercise any other calling. Later, the Commons petition that villains may not put their children to school in order to advance them by the Church, and complain that villains fly to cities and boroughs, whence their masters cannot recover them, and, if they attempt it, are hindered by the people.

Closely connected with the progress of constitutional government was the social movement that was fast changing the face of the country. The force of the feudal system is dissolved, and in every attempt to maintain it we see only the shadow of a power once supreme, retreating and diminishing before an expanding and omnipotent reality,—the doctrine that men are equal before God.

Religion.—To the social revolution was added the fresh impulse of a religious one. The Church was in its noon of splendor, but the blaze was only a veil over the central darkness. Petrarch says the Papacy sat 'as a blight over peoples, and nations, and tongues, toying and confident in the abundance of earthly riches, and careless of the eternal.' Of Rome itself he says:

Once Rome! now, false and guilty Babylon!
Hive of deceits! Terrible prison
Where the good doth die, the bad is fed and fattened!
Hell of the living!
Sad world that doth endure it! Cast her out!

Foreign priests were still intruded into English livings and English sees, direct taxes were imposed on the clergy, first fruits were claimed from all ecclesiastical preferments. At the beginning of the century, the papal revenue was twelve times greater than the civil; at the end of the century, the Commons declared that the taxes paid to the Church were five times greater than the taxes paid to the crown.

While the exactions of Rome severed the priesthood, the greed and scandal of both provoked the sleepless hatred of the people. Half the soil was in the hands of the clergy, and with

all their wealth they bore as little as they could of the burdens of the State. Their courts mildly noticed the crimes and vices of their order. They worried the community by their insufferable claim to control wills, contracts, and divorces; by their endless dues and fees; by their countless legal citations of citizens, to extort costs and fines. They were rent by their own dissensions. Each order of friars hated the other; the monks hated them and the parish priests, or secular clergy, who were far better; and the last looked upon both as their natural enemies. The bishops, again, were estranged from the mass of the clergy by the shameful inequality between their respective revenues, and by their strife for political emoluments. There was a universal clamor against the mendicant orders, who, though rich, pretended to be poor; and, impure of life, pretended to be good.

There is a general desire to shake off the papal bondage, and an irrepressible cry for truth and purity in life and in the Church. In the reign of Edward III, every person is outlawed who carries any cause by appeal to the court of Rome. In the committee of eighteen to whom Richard's last parliament delegated their whole power, there is not the name of an ecclesiastic to be found. The barons are jealous of the prelates. The courtly Chaucer laughs at the jingling bells of the hunting abbots. Piers the Plowman, a man of the multitude and a victim, lifts his indignant voice. Robin Hood, the ballad hero, orders his folk to 'spare the yeomen, laborers, even knights, if they are good fellows,' but never to pardon abbots or bishops. Wycliffe protests against the cardinal beliefs of Catholicism, organizes the growing discontent, justifies and supports it with principles, tenets and reasonings. His disciples—'the Simple Priests,' or 'Lollards,' whose homely sermons and long russet dress move the ridicule of the regulars—diffuse his doctrines, which rapidly infect all classes, the baronage of the city, the peasantry of the country-side, even the monasticism of the cell. Women, as well as men, become preachers of the new sect, whose numbers increase till it seems to the panic-stricken churchmen that every third man in the street is a Lollard—a heretic. A more wholesome conception of existence is forming, from which will be finally educed—in the yet far-off national outbreak of the Reformation—a better civilization, founded on the respect for liberty and justice.

Yet we will not forget that in the two great deliverances from the tyranny of nation over nation and from the property of man in man, the chief agent was the Church of Rome. Distinctions of caste were to her peculiarly odious, because incompatible with other distinctions essential to her system. How great a part she had in the abolition of slavery we have elsewhere seen. Tenderly treating her own bondmen (whom she declined to enfranchise), we have seen her regularly adjuring the dying slaveholder, as he asked for the last sacraments, to emancipate his brethren for whom Christ had died. Corrupt as she was, there is reason to believe that had she been overthrown in the fourteenth century, the vacancy would have been occupied by a system more corrupt still. Her leading-strings, which will impede the full-grown man, are necessary to preserve and uphold the infant. She will be allowed a hundred and fifty years more in which to fill the measure of her offences, that she may fall only when time has laid bare the root of her degeneracy, when faith and manners, ideas and morals, may change together and subsist in harmony.

Learning.—In an age when every one, rich or poor, lives with his hand on his sword, it is not strange that general education should have been neglected. War and woodcraft were the pride of the great. Not one in five hundred could have stumbled through a psalm. If they read, they spelled the small words, and skipped the large ones. Information passed from mouth to mouth, not from eye to eye. Men were auditors, not readers. The populace had poets for themselves, whose looser carols were the joy of the streets or the fields,—songs that perished on the lips of the singers. Across the gulf of mystery, the opening line of some fugitive rehearsal falls upon the ear like the echo of a vanished world,—

‘Sitteth all stille, and harkeneth to me!’

The clergy alone were learned, and they only relatively. The pulpit was the chief means of instruction. In the little village church,—endeared to the peasant by the most touching incidents of his life, or in vast and spired cathedral, amid smoking censers, the blaze of lamps, the tinkling of silver bells, the play of jewelled vessels, and gorgeous dresses of violet, green, and gold,—listened the silent and unquestioning people.

Books—still in manuscripts, copied in the *Scriptorium* by the

patient monks—were few and costly. They had not always titles to denote their subjects, and are described by their outsides—often shining in extreme splendor. Froissart, the French historian, on a last visit to England in 1396, presented to Richard a book beautifully illuminated, engrossed with his own hand, bound in crimson velvet, and embellished with silver bosses, clasps, and golden roses. As much as forty pounds was paid for a copy of the Bible. Shelves were not required. At the beginning of the century, the Oxford library consisted of a few tracts kept in chests. A private collection—scant and phenomenal—consisted for the greater part of the romances of chivalry, so long the favorite literature of the noble, the dame, and the loungee of the baronial castle. Some monasteries had not more than twenty volumes. Latin versions of the Scriptures,—Greek or Hebrew never; a commentator, a father, a schoolman; the mediæval Christian poets who composed in Latin; a romance, an accidental classic, chronicles and legends,—such are the usual contents of a surviving catalogue—a sad contraction of human knowledge.

The glimmerings of the revival of the ancient classics, incipient in the twelfth century, fading in the thirteenth owing to the prevalence of scholasticism, are somewhat more distinct in the fourteenth. Petrarch and Boccaccio were the first to lead the way in disinterring them from the dungeon-darkness where they safely slept, undisturbed by the monks who were ignorant of their treasures or regarded them as the works of idolaters. The light of learning, having first made its entrance into France, now, in natural course of progress, found its way into England,—dimmed by distance from its Italian focus. The debt of England to Italy in the matter of our literature begins with Chaucer, but a hundred years will pass before the imagination of the North is inflamed by the sacred fires kindled at Florence and at Rome.

The common herd of students (through the medium of Latin translations) looked upon Aristotle as their infallible oracle and guide, though stripping him of all those excellences that really belonged to him, and incapable of entering into the true spirit of his writings. Oxford—and Cambridge as well—had received many noble foundations. She was the school of the island, the fount of the new heresies, the link of England to the learned of Europe. To her, during the English wars, was transferred the

intellectual supremacy of Paris. But of the vast multitude once composing its learned mob, there remained in 1367 less than a fifth. The master idea, running to excess, was languishing by expenditure of force.

Language.—For the scholastic uses of the learned, and for ecclesiastical purposes, Latin was still a living though a dying tongue. For the last fifty years of the century, French was to all classes of Englishmen a foreign language, and, even as taught, was a mere dialect of the Parisian. Chaucer, in the *Testament of Love* (attributed) says :

‘Certes there ben some that speke thyr poysy mater in Frenche, of whyche speche the Frenchemen have as good a fantasye as we have in hearing of French mennes Englyshe.’

And adds:

‘Let, then, clerkes endyten in Latyn, for they have the propertye in science and the knowinge in that facultye, and lette Frenchmen in theyr Frenche also endyte theyr queynt termes, for it is kyndly to theyr mouthes; and let us shewe our fantasies in suche wordes as we learneden of our dames tonge.’

The Prioress in the *Tales*, though she speaks French neatly, speaks it only —

‘After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,
For Frenche of Paris was to hire unknowe.’

[her

But the old Teutonic, assuming a new organization, recovered its ascendancy by the same circumstances which depressed its rival. Formal note of its triumph is found in a statute of 1362, which orders English to be used in courts of law, because ‘the French tongue is much unknown.’ Later it is observed of the grammar schools that ‘children leaveth Frensche and construeth and lerneth in Engliche.’ Chaucer, writing for the instruction of his little son, uses the vernacular, because ‘curious endityng and harde sentences are full hevy at once for such a childe to lerne,’ and, like a true patriot, bids the boy think of it as the *King’s English*.

The first revolution which English underwent, consisted, as formerly explained, in the conversion of it from an inflectional and synthetic into a non-inflected and analytic speech. Its state in this particular towards the close of the century may be not unfairly represented by the Lord’s Prayer:

‘Our Fadir that art in hevenys;
Halewid be thi name.
Thi kyngdom come to,

Be thi wil done in erthe as in hevene.
 Give to us this day oure breed oure othir substaunce.
 And forgive to us our dettis as we forgiven to our dettouris:
 And lede us not into temptacioun:
 But delyvere us from yvel. Amen.'

The second, which it was now undergoing, and which its adoption by the court and nobility made possible, was its intermixture with foreign elements. Translations and travel greatly enriched it by importations from the South. The new power of thinking, and the new words to embody its conceptions, came together, twin-born. The English language thus enlarging its domain by conquest and assimilation, yet retaining its essentially Germanic character, displays the same powers of acquisition as have distinguished the race.

Against this alien admixture the critics protested. 'I seke,' says one, 'no strange Inglyss, bot lightest (easiest) and comunest.' Thus early was our purity imperilled! As if new modes of expression were not the creatures of new modifications of thought. A national idiom is in perpetual movement, resembling, as it struggles into perfect existence, the lion of the bard of *Paradise*,—

'— pawing to get free
 His hinder parts.'

What survives? Trevisa, translating a Latin treatise in 1387, tells us he avoids 'the old and ancient English.' In the next century, his printer will rewrite this translation, 'to change the rude and old English; that is, to wit, certain words which in these days be neither used nor understood!' Little did Caxton imagine that he himself would be to us what Trevisa was to him,—an archaism, covered with the rust of time. The cry of the purist is the pang of parturition. Styles are like shades melting into each other, passing with the generations that cast them. It is with words as with empires. We each in our day see only the beginnings of things.

Poetry.—Two notions rule the age: the one tending to a renovation of the heart; the other, to a prodigal satisfaction of the senses; the one disposing to righteousness, the other to excitement; the one planting the ideal amidst forms of force and joy; the other amidst sentiments of truth, law, duty; the one producing finical verses and diverting stories, the other the indig-

nant protest against hypocrisy and the impassioned prayer for salvation. For the omnipotent idea of justice will overflow, and conscience, like other things, will have its poem.

In the *Vision of Piers the Plowman*, by **William Langland** (1362), the sombre genius of the Saxon reappears, with its tragic pictures and emotions. The author—‘Long Will,’ they call him,—is a secular priest, who once earned a miserable livelihood by singing at the funerals of the rich. Silent, moody, and defiant, his world is the world of the poor. Far from sin and suffering his fancy flies to a May morning on the Malvern Hills, where he falls asleep and has a wonderful dream:

‘I was weary for-wandered,	[with wandering]	Found I there between	
And went me to rest		Of all manner of men,	
Under a brood bank,	[broad]	The mean and the rich,	
By a burn’s side;	[stream’s]	Werking and wandering	
And as I lay and leaned,		As the world asketh.	
And looked on the waters,		Some putten hem to the plough	[them]
I slombered into a sleeping,		Playden full seld,	
It swayed so mury,	[pleasant]	In setting and sowing	
Then gan I meten	[meet]	Swonken full hard,	[labored]
A marvellous sweven,	[dream]	And women that wasters	[produced]
That I was in a wilderness,		With gluttony destroyeth.	
Wist I never where;		And some putten hem to pride,	
And, as I beheld into the east		Apparelled him thereafter,	
On high to the sun,		In countenance of clothing	
I seigh a tower on a toft	[saw, hill]	Comen degnised,	[came]
Friliche ymaked,	[richly]	In prayers and penances	
A deep dale beneath,		Putten hem many,	
A donjon therein,		All for the love of our Lord	
With deep ditches and darke,		Liveden full strait,	
And dreadful of sight.		In hope to have after	
A fair field full of folk		Heaven-riche bliss.	

The canvas of the dreamer is crowded and astir with life, from the king to the bondman. Here are the minstrels, who ‘geten gold with their glee’; jesters and jugglers, ‘Judas’ children’; petitioners and beggars, who flatter ‘for hir food’ and fight ‘at the ale’; pilgrims, who seek the —

‘— saintes at Rome,
They wenten forth in hir way
With many wise tales,
And hadden leave to lien
All hir life after;’ [live]

the court-haunting bishop, pardoners, ‘parting the silver’ with the parish priest; friars,—

‘All the four orders,
Preaching the people
For profit of hem selve:’

lawyers, whom the people hate,—of whom the insurrectionists will shout, ‘Not till all these are killed will the land enjoy its old freedom again,’—whom Burns will style ‘hell-hounds preying in the kennels of justice,’—

‘Yet hoved ther an hundred *[waited*
In howves of selk, *[hoods*
Sergeantz it bi-semed
That serveden at the barre,
Pleteden for penyes
And of poundes the lawe;

And noght for love of our Lord
Unlose hire lippes ones.
Thow myghtest bettre meete myst
On Malverne hilles,
Than gete a mom of hire mouth,
Til moneie be shewed.’

A heavenly messenger—Holy Church—appears to the dreamer, and shows him in this mortal assemblage a jewelled lady:

‘Hire robe was ful riche,
Of reed scarlet engreyned,
With ribanes of reed gold
And of riche stones.

Hire array me ravysshed,
Swich richesse saugh I nevere;
I hadde wonder what she was,
And whos wif she were.’

This lady is Mede (Lucre), to whom high and low, lay and clergy, alike offer homage. She contracts a legal marriage with Falsehood, and the king would marry her to Conscience, but the latter replies:

‘Crist it me forbede!
Er I wedde swiche a wif,
Wo me betide!
For she is frele of hire feith,
Fikel of her speche,
And maketh men mysdo
Many score tymes.’

Reason preaches repentance to offenders. Many are converted, among whom are Proud Heart, who vows to wear hair-cloth; Envy, lean, cowering, biting his lips, and wearing the sleeves of a friar’s frock; and Covetousness, bony, beetle-browed, bleary-eyed. The repentant hearers set out on a pilgrimage to Truth. They meet a far-travelling pilgrim, who proves a blind guide, for of such a saint he has never heard. The wanderers put themselves under the direction of a carter, Piers the Plowman. His is a gospel of works, and he puts them to toil in his vineyard. But they become seditious, and are at last reduced by the aid of Hunger, who subdues Waste, leader of the revolt, and humbles his followers. ‘Pardons,’ or ‘indulgences,’ are satirized, and with the anxiety of Luther to know what is righteousness the poet goes in search of Do-well. He asks each one to explain where he may be found, and finds him by the description of Wit, in the Castle of the Flesh built by Kind (Nature), who resides there with his bride Anima (Soul). Do-better is her

handmaid, and Do-best her spiritual guide. Thence, for further instruction he is taken to dine with Clergy, and while they refresh themselves with psalms and texts, which are the bill of fare, Clergy gives his pupil a dissertation, in the course of which he refers to one Piers Plowman who had made light of all knowledge but love, and says that Do-well and Do-better are finders of Do-best, who saves men's souls. The pilgrim exclaims,—

‘This is a long lesson,
And litel am I the wiser,’

and receives a reproof for his indocile temper. Vain is the wisdom of man. Do-well, Do-better, and Do-best are at last identified with the Saviour, who is Love. Of low estate, come to direct the erring and redeem the lost, he appears in the garb of Piers the Plowman,—type of the poor and simple. The Immortal dies, descends into Hell, rescues the patriarchs and prophets, triumphs over Death and the Devil. The *righteous life* is found, and the dreamer wakes in a transport, with the Easter chimes pealing in his ears. Alas, only in a dream is mortal victory complete. Over the beatific vision roll the mists of earth again, and Antichrist—the Man of Sin—with raised banner appears. Bells are rung, and the monks in solemn procession go out to receive with congratulations their lord and father. With seven great giants—the seven Deadly Sins¹—he besieges Conscience. Idleness leads the assault, and brings with him more than a thousand prelates. Nature sends up a host of plagues and diseases to punish the sacrilegious show:

‘Kynde Conscience tho herde,—and cam out of the planetes,
And sente forth his forreyours—feveres and fluxes,
Coughes and cardiaques,—crampes and tooth-aques,
Reumes and radegundes,—and roynous scabbes,
Biles and bocches,—and brennynge aques,
Frenesies and foul yvels,—forageres of kynde. . . .
There was “Harrow! and Help!—Here cometh Kynde!
With Deeth that is dredful—to undo us alle!”
The lord that lyved after lust—tho aloud cryde. . . .
Deeth cam dryvyng after,—and alle to dust passhed
Kynges and knyghtes,—kaysers and popes, . . .
Manye a lovely lady—and lemmans of knyghtes,
Swowned and swelted for sorwe of hise dyntes.’ [lovers]

¹ *Pride*, *Luxury*, *Envy*, *Wrath*, a friar, whose aunt is a nun, and who is both cook and gardener to a convent; *Avarice*, who lies, cheats, lends money upon usury, and who, not understanding the French word *restitution*, thinks it another term for stealing; *Gluttony*, who, on his way to church, is tempted into a London ale-house; *Sloth*, a priest, who knows rhymes about Robin Hood better than his prayers, and who can find a hare in a field more readily than he can read the lives of the saints.

Contrition is implored for aid, but slumbers; and Conscience, hard pressed by Pride and Sloth, rouses himself with a final effort, and seizing his staff resumes his doubtful quest, praying for luck and health 'till he have Piers the Plowman'—till he find the Christ; no clear outlook, no sure hope; like the Wandering Jew, bowed beneath the burden of the curse, weary with unrelieved toil, worn with ceaseless trudging.

This serious poem, which makes Scripture and deed the test of creed—all outward observances but hollow shows—prepares the soil for the reception of that seed which Wycliffe and his associates are sowing. The imitations—the *Plowman's Creed*, by a nameless author, and the *Plowman's Tale*, attributed to Chaucer—bear witness to its popularity and fame. Its wide circulation among the commonalty of the realm is chiefly due to its moral and social bearings. Like the Declaration of Independence, it expresses the popular sentiment on the subjects it discusses,—the vices of Church, State, and Society. A spiritual picture which brings into distinct consciousness what many feel and but dimly apprehend,—the solitary advocate of the children of want and oppression.

A part of its interest, at least for posterity, is derived from its antiquated Saxon and its rustic pith. Without artifice of connection or involution of plot, it is an impulsive voice from the wilderness, in the language of the people; and, as such, returns to or continues the old alliterative metre and unrhymed verse—the recurrence at certain regular intervals of like beginnings, without, as Milton contemptuously calls it, the jingling sound of like endings. Thus:

'In a sómer sésón — whan sóft was the sónnē,
I shópē me in shróundēs — as I a shépē wérē,
In hábite as an héremite — unhóly of wórkēs,
Went wýde in this wórlð — wóndres to hérē.'

The fashionable machinery of talking abstractions gives evidence of French influence. The satirist, like Bunyan, veils his head in allegory. Perhaps the ideal company who flit along the dreamy scenes of his wild invention, have some distant relationship to the shadowy pilgrimage of that 'Immortal Dreamer' to the 'Celestial City.'

The second main stream of the poetical literature of the period is story-telling. **Robert Manning** garnishes with rhymes a history

of England beginning with the immemorial Brutus, and calls it a poem. Of a style easier than that of Robert of Gloucester and of diction more advanced, it discourses without developing, and sees moving spectacles without emotion:

‘Lordynges that be now here,	
If ye wille listene and lere	[<i>learn</i>]
All the story of Inglande,	
Als Robert Mannyng wryten it fand,	[<i>as, written</i>]
And on Inglysch has it schewed,	
Not for the lered but for the lewed;	[<i>laity</i>]
For tho that on this land wounn	[<i>those, dwell</i>]
That the Latin ne the Frankys conn	[<i>know</i>]
For to hauf solace and gamen,	
In felauschip when tha sitt samen;	[<i>together</i>]
And it is wisdom for to wyttten	[<i>know</i>]
The state of the Land, and hef it wryten,	
What manere of folk first it wan,	
And of what kynde it first began,	
And gude it is for many thynges	
For to here the dedis of kynges,	[<i>hear</i>]
Whilk were foles, and whilk were wyse	[<i>which</i>]
And whilk of tham couth most quantyse;	[<i>knew, artfulness</i>]
And whilk did wrong, and whilk ryght,	
And whilk mayntened pes and flight.’	[<i>peace</i>]

So forth and so forth. Loquacious, clear, and insipid, we imagine, as its French original.

But reverie and fantasy are needed to satisfy the pleasant indolence of the chivalric world and the courts that shine upon the heights. The tales that sufficed to allure the attention of a ruder ancestry, now demand more volume, more variety, more color; and all that history and imagination have gathered in the East, in France, in Wales, in Provence, in Italy, wrought and re-wrought by the minstrelsy of three centuries, heroics of the North that magnify the valor and daring of the cavalier, lyrics of the South that dwell on the devotion of the knight to his lady-love,—serve as the stuff for the looms of the mighty weavers of verse. Before the frivolous unreality of the new chivalry, songs of martial achievement predominated; but the intellectual palate of the gentry now prefers the later poetry of sensuous enjoyment,—the *trouvère*, with its amours and mysticism; or the *troubadour*, with its romantic follies. The passion of war has degenerated into a pageant, and *Romance*, from the light *fabliaux* to the entangling fiction of many thousand lines, tells of little but the ecstasies of love. Love is the essential theme,—love in its first emotions, love happy, jealous; the lover walking,

sitting, sleeping, sick, despairing, dead. In France they have Floral Games where the assembled poets are housed in artificial arbors dressed with flowers, and a violet of gold is awarded the best poem. The love-courts discuss — and decide affirmatively — whether each one who loves grows pale at the sight of her whom he loves; whether each action of the lover ends in the thought of her whom he loves; whether love can refuse anything to love. A company of enthusiasts, love-penitents, to prove the strength of their passion, dress in summer in furs and heavy garments, and in winter in light gauze. When Froissart presents to Richard his book bound in crimson velvet, guarded by clasps of silver, and studded with golden roses,—

‘Than the kyng demanded me whereof it treated, and I shewed hym how it treated maters of loue; wherof the kynge was gladd.’

While rowing on the Thames, **Gower** (1325–1408) meets the royal barge, and is called to the king’s side. ‘Book some new thing,’ says Richard, ‘in the way you are used, into which book I myself may often look’; and the request is the origin of *Confessio Amantis*—the *Confession of a Lover*. It is a dialogue between an unhappy lover and his confessor, the object of which is to explain and classify the impediments of love. Through thirty thousand weary lines, the lover, like a good Catholic, states his distress, and is edified, if not comforted, by expositions of hermetic science and Aristotelian philosophy, discourses on politics, litanies of ancient and modern legends, gleaned from the compilers for the morality they furnish. Thus a serpent, Aspidis, bears in his head the precious stone called the carbuncle, which enchanters strive to win from him by lulling him asleep with magic songs. The wise reptile, as soon as the charmer approaches, presses one ear flat upon the ground, and covers the other with his tail. *Ergo*, let us obstinately resist all temptations that assail us through the avenues of the bodily organs. Even as Ulysses stopped his companions’ ears with wax and lashed himself to the ship’s mast, to escape the enticement of the Sirens’ song. The confession terminates with some parting injunctions of the priest, the bitter judgment of Venus that he should remember his old age and leave off such fooleries, his cure from the wound of Cupid’s dart, and his absolution. He is dismissed with advice from the goddess to go ‘where moral virtue dwelleth.’

To the last, Gower is learned, dignified, didactic. He would be nothing, if he were not moral. His principal merit lies in the sententious passages which are here and there interspersed, and the narratives culled with dull prolixity from legendary lore, some of which—as the *Trumpet of Death*—deserve notice for their striking tone of reflection, and others for the charm of their details. Thus, it was a law in Hungary, that when a man was condemned to die, the sentence should be announced to him by the blast of a brazen trumpet before his house. At a magnificent court-festival, the monarch was plunged in deep melancholy, and his brother anxiously inquired the reason. No reply was made, but at break of morn the fatal trumpet sounded at the brother's gate. The doomed man came to the palace weeping and despairing. Then the king said solemnly, that if such grief were caused by the death of the body, how much profounder must be the sorrow awakened by the thought which afflicted him as he sat among his guests,—the thought of that eternal death of the spirit which Heaven has ordained as the wages of sin.

The tale of Florent is in Gower's happiest manner, and reveals, in the desert of platitudes, some of the brilliancy and grace of older models. A knight riding through a narrow pass in search of adventures, is attacked, taken, and led to a castle. There, at the peril of his life, he is required to state—

‘What alle women most desire.’

That he may have time for reflection and consideration, he is granted a leave of absence, on condition that at the expiration of his term he shall return with his answer. He tells all what has befallen him, and asks the opinion of the wisest, but—

‘Such a thing they cannot find
By constellation ne kind,—’

that is, neither by the stars nor by the laws of nature. Our hero—still pondering what to say—sets out on his return. His troubled meditations are at length interrupted by the discovery of an old woman sitting under a large tree,—

‘That for to speak of flesh and bone
So foul yet saw he never none.’

He fain would pass quickly on, but she calls him by name, and warns him that he is riding to his death, adding, however, that she can save him. He begs her advice, and she asks, ‘What

wilt thou give me?’ ‘Anything you may ask.’ ‘I want nothing more, therefore pledge me’—

“‘That you will be my housebände.”

“Nay,” said Florent, “that may not be.”

“Ride themne forth thy way,” quod she.’

In vain he offers lands, parks, houses,—she must have a husband. He wisely concludes that it is—

‘Better to take her to his wife,

Or elles for to lose his life.’

He also reflects that she probably will not live very long, and resolves to put her meanwhile—

‘Where that no man her shoulde know

Till she with death were overthrow.’

Having signified his assent, she tells him, that when he reaches his destination, he is to reply—

‘That alle women lievest would

Be sovereign of mannes love;’

for as *sovereign*, she will have *all her will*, which is the beatitude of her desire. With this answer, she says he shall save himself, and he rides sadly on, for he is under oath to return for his bride. At the castle, in the presence of the summoned inmates, he names several things of his own invention, but none will do; and finally he gives the answer the old woman directed, which is declared to be the true one. Retracing his steps, a free but wretched man, he finds the old woman in the identical spot,—

‘The loathliest wight

That ever man cast on his eye,

Her nose bas, her browes high,

[*low, flat*

Her eyen small, and depe-set,

Her chekes ben with teres wet,

And rivelin as an empty skin,

[*shrivelled*

Hangende down unto her chin,

[*hanging*

Her lippes shrunken ben for age;

There was no grace in her visage.’

She insists, however, upon the agreement, and, sick at heart, almost preferring death,—

‘In ragges as she was to-tore

He set her on his horse before.’

riding through all the lanes and by-ways that no one may see him. At home he explains that he is obliged—

‘This beste wedde to his wife,

For elles he had lost his life.’

Maids of honor are sent in, who renew her attire, all except her

matted and unsightly hair, which she will not allow them to touch.

‘But when she was fully array’d,
And her attire was all assay’d,
Then was she fouler unto see.’

Poor Florent takes her less for better than for worse, and, the ceremony over, covers his head in grief:

‘His body mighte well be there;
But as of thought and of *memoire*
His hearte was in *Purgatoire*.’

She would ingratiate herself in his affections, and approaching him takes him softly by the hand. He turns suddenly and beholds a vision of sweet smiles and beautiful eyes. He would come nearer, is stopped, and told—

‘that for to win or lose
He mote one of two thinges choose,
Wher he will have her such o’ night [*whether*]
Or elles upon daye’s light;
For he shall not have bothe two.’

At loss, conscious only of his idolatry, he at last exclaims,—

“‘I n’ot what answer I shall give,
But ever, while that I may live,
I will that ye be my mistress,
For I can naught myselve gness
Which is the best unto my choice.
Thus grant I yon my whole voice.
Choose for us bothen, I you pray,
And, what as ever that ye say,
Right as ye wille, so will I.”’

This is the point—the surrender of his will to hers. This is ‘What alle women most desire’—to be sovereign of man’s love—in short to have their own way. Foretaste of Paradise for the happy groom, whose cup is now filled to overflowing:

“‘My lord,” she saide, “grand-merci [*many thanks*]
For of this word that ye now sayn
That ye have made me sovereign,
My destiny is overpassed:
That n’er hereafter shall be lass’d [*lessened*]
My beanty, which that I now have,
Till I betake unto my grave.
Both night and day as I am now,
I shall always be such to you.
Thus, I am yours for evermo.”’

As an artist, partly the reformer and partly the story-teller, Gower bridges the space between Langland and Chaucer. His English, too, in vocabulary and structure is later than the first

and earlier than the second. His metre is the octosyllabic, of four iambs. His rhythm is more smooth than melodious. He is touched only by French influence. There are extant about fifty French amatory sonnets composed by him in imitation of Provençal models. On the whole, like the dozen of translators who copy, compile, abridge, he constructs an encyclopædia, a text-book, in rhymed memoranda; but if excellence be comparative and all criticism relative to the age, we may hail this grave father of our poesy, whose verses, if destitute of creative touches, are stamped with the force of ethical reasoning. Amid triflers, he is earnest, with a deep-rooted idea that the minstrel should be a preacher. In his political admonitions, in his satire on the relaxed morals of the Pulpit, the Bench, the Bar, the Throne, and the Court, he sounds the deep tones of the patriot. He says:

‘I do not affect to touch the stars, or write the wonders of the poles; but rather, with the common human voice that is lamenting in this land, I write the ills I see. In the voice of my crying there will be nothing doubtful, for every man’s knowledge will be its best interpreter.’

Again:

‘Give me that there shall be less vice, and more virtne for my speaking.’

Only one of his three great works has been opened to the world, but the marble perpetuates what the press does not. In the Southwark Church of St. Saviour, his image lies extended on the tomb, with folded hands, in damask habit flowing to his feet; his head supported by three sculptured volumes¹ and decked with a garland of roses, while three visionary virgins, Charity, Mercy, and Pity, solicit the prayer of the passer-by for the soul of the dreamless sleeper.

The fashions of man have their date and their termination. The fourteenth century is memorable as the era in which the romance-poetry of France, displaced in form, declines in substance. Even comedy cannot thrive on trifles. The literature that has not truth or seriousness must die. Life does not move through a perpetual May-day, nor is it invigorated in gorgeous idleness. Nourished on this poetry, another taste is springing up, which is to seek its subjects, not in France, but in the chaster Roman and Grecian lore. A new spirit pierces through,—no longer the childish imitation of chivalrous life, but the crav-

¹ *Speculum Meditantis* (*Mirror of One Meditating*), in French; *Vox Clamantis* (*Voice of One Crying*), in Latin; *Confessio Amantis*, in English;—equally graced with Latin titles, though in three languages.

ing for deep truths. English poetry, as distinguished on the one hand from the pedantry and barrenness of the romancers, and on the other from the impulsive cries of *Beowulf*, begins with **Chaucer**, the first skilled and conscious workman; who, ceasing to repeat, observes; whose characters, no longer a phantom procession, are living and distinct persons,—individualized and typical; and who, seeking material in the common forest of the middle ages, replants it in his own soil, to send out new shoots and enduring bloom.

Prose.—Our early literature, as formerly observed, is almost exclusively one of poetry. Records, chronicles, books of instruction, of science, there are; but of prose, as the embodiment of high art, there is absolutely none. As we have cathedrals while the builders live in hovels, so, under the impulse of the imaginative sentiment, we have poetry before we have prose, which passes into pure literature only when the views of men have settled down to sober truth, and art is so diffused as to give grace and expression to things familiar and homely.

Divines and philosophers, mathematicians and scientists, write in Latin. The prose works in English have an archaic and moral rather than an artistic interest. **Mandeville** and **Wycliffe**—the one in his travels, the other in his translations of the Bible—are, in the mixed vernacular, the first reapers on the margin of the great future of English prose.

History.—In this mixed state of glory clouded with barbarism, there is, there can be, no annalist deserving the name of historian. The chroniclers have the usual aptitude for credence, unastonished at astonishing events, credulous and happy by constitution and contagion. They begin, as usual, *ab initio*, with the Conquest, and reach home, across chasms supplied by an ever-ready fancy. The narrative grows like a rolling snowball, gathering whatever lies in its path, fact or legend, appropriate or inappropriate. The readers or hearers are as well prepared to believe as the writers are prompt to collate. A hundred years hence the first peer¹ of the realm will be proud of deriving his pedigree from a fabulous knight in a romantic genealogy.

Of plumed knights and penitential saints, of warring kings

¹ Duke of Buckingham.

and feasting nobles, of furious and raving figures, we have a plenty; but of history that will trace the ideal tendencies of the age, that will exhibit the world of ideas, the life of the people as a drama in which good and evil fight their everlasting battle,—of history in which calmness of insight exists with intensity of feeling, there is yet no prophecy.

Philosophy.—This consists, for the most part, in ringing changes on the syllogism,—

‘Barbara, Celarent, Darii, Ferio,
Cesare, Camestres, Festino, Baroko,’ etc.;

circulating in endless vortices; creating, swallowing,—itself. Inductions, corollaries, dilemmas, logical diagrams, cast wonderful horoscopes, but end—where perhaps all metaphysical speculation ends, as to the stolen jewel of our search—in nothingness.

The old dispute, long dormant, was now revived with a white-heat of disputation. The Realists maintained that universal ideas or essences belonged to the class of real *things*, either eternally impressed upon matter or eternally existent in the Divine Mind as the *models* of created objects; while the Nominalists held that these pretended universals had neither form nor essence, but were merely modes of conception, existing solely in and for the mind,—only individuals are real.

Of Nominalism, **Occam**¹ was now the eminent spokesman. The universal, he argues, exists in the mind, not substantially, but as a representation; while outwardly it is only a word, or in general a sign, of whatever kind, representing conventionally several objects. Only an *a posteriori* proof of the being of God, and that not a rigorous one, is possible. As for the rest, the ‘articles of faith’ have not even the advantage of probability for the wise, and especially for those who trust to the natural reason. Here only the authority of the Bible and Christian tradition should be accepted. Theological doctrines are not demonstrable, yet the will to believe the indemonstrable is meritorious. Thus reason and faith are antagonized, the critical method rises to an independent rank, and, with the coöperation of other influences tending in the same direction, the way is prepared for an inductive investigation of external nature and psychical phenomena.

¹A Franciscan of the severe order, and a pupil of Duns Scotus; born in the county of Surrey, died April 7, 1347.

The bearings of the discussion upon vital theology explain the furious energy of the disputants. If, for example, the universal is a mere symbol, Christ—the Infinite—is not really present in the Eucharist. If Realism is false, the doctrine of the Trinity, according to which the one divine essence is entirely present in each of the three divine persons, is false. Distinctions of less moment might in the Ages of Faith shatter an empire. Hence it was that the University of Paris, by a public edict (1339) solemnly condemned and prohibited the philosophy of Occam, as prejudicial to the interests of the Church. His party in consequence, flourished the more. What is more natural than to love and pursue the forbidden?

Science.—When, as here, the measure of probability is essentially theological, if scientific theories are discussed, they will be colored with religious thought. The scientist,—

‘Transported
And rapt in secret studies,’—

is imagined to know more than the human faculties can acquire. The wise are magicians; and the enlightened, heretics.

Astrology—fortune-telling by the aspect of the heavens and the influence of the stars—was the favorite superstition of the East and West. Great circumspection was necessary; neglect of it was fatal. In 1327, Asculanus, having performed some experiments that seemed miraculous to the vulgar, and having also offended many by some predictions said to have been fulfilled, was supposed to deal with infernal spirits, and was committed to the flames by the inquisitors of Florence.

Alchemy was generally confined to the mystery which all sought to penetrate,—the transmutation of metals into gold. Edward III, not less credulous than his grandfather, issued an order in the following terms:

‘Know all men that we have been assured that John of Rons and Master William of Dalby know how to make silver by the art of alchemy; that they have made it in former times, and still continue to make it; and, considering that these men, by their art, and by making the precious metal, may be profitable to us and to our kingdom, we have commanded our well beloved Thomas Cary to apprehend the aforesaid John and William, wherever they can be found, within liberties or without, and bring them to us, together with all the instruments of their art, under safe and sure custody.’

The art of medicine was still in the greater part a compound of superstition and quackery. Relics, shrines, and miracle-cures were a source of boundless profit to ecclesiastics. It forms an

epoch, that in this century Mundinus publicly dissected two human bodies in Bologna. A French surgeon, writing in 1363, says:

‘The practitioners in surgery are divided into five sects. The first follow Roger and Roland, and the four masters, and apply pontices to all wounds and abscesses; the second follow Brunus and Theodoric, and in the same cases use wine only; the third follow Saliceto and Lanfranc, and treat wounds with ointments and soft plasters; the fourth are chiefly Germans, who attend the armies, and promiscuously use charms, potions, oil, and wool; the fifth are old women and ignorant people, who have recourse to the saints in all cases.’

One of Gower’s most graceful passages is that in which he pictures Medea going forth at midnight to gather herbs for the incantations of her witchcraft:

‘Thus it befell upon a night,
Whann there was naught but sterre light,
She was vanished right as hir list,
That no wight but hirselve wist:
And that was at midnight tide;
The world was still on every side.
With open head, and foote all bare
His heare to spread; she gan to fare:
Upon the clothes gyrt she was,
And speecheles, upon the gras
She glode forth, as an adder doth.’

Theology.—The central doctrine of the mediæval Church was the carnal nature of the sacraments—*Transubstantiation*.¹ Long ago, in the ninth century, it had been denied that the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper were transmuted into the body and blood of Christ. Two centuries later, the dispute was famous; and Berenger, who had the temerity to teach that they were but symbols, was terrified into publicly signing a confession of faith, which, among other tenets, declared:

‘The bread and wine, after consecration, are not only sacrament, but also the real body and blood of Jesus Christ; and this body and blood are handled by the priest and consumed by the faithful, not merely in a sacramental sense, but in reality and truth, as other sensible objects are.’

The controversy continued. Bread was deified, carried in solemn pomp through the public streets to be administered to the sick or dying. By his exclusive right to the performance of the miracle in the mass, the humblest priest was exalted above princes. Against this cardinal belief of the early Church, as of the Roman Catholics now,—that the material flesh and blood of the Saviour could be eaten as ordinary meat,—Wycliffe issued a formal pro-

¹ A word introduced and established by Innocent III, at the fourth Lateran Council, 1215.

test (1381), and with that memorable denial began the movement of revolt.

Under every creed, however monstrous, beneath every formula, however obsolete, is a philosophy. Wherever the importance of conduct has been felt, one question has been of chief concern,—‘Who shall deliver me from *the body of this death?*’ Jew and Persian had witnessed, with idolatrous Greece, that the especial strength of evil lay in *matter*. How came this substance to be tainted and infirm? Plato had left the question doubtful. The Jew found his solution in the fatal apple. The earth was a garden of delight, over whose hospitable surface no beast or bird of prey broke the changeless peace: but Adam, the first-born, sinned—no matter how, and all this fair scene dissolved in carnage. Creation groaned in ruins, and the human frame—hitherto pure as immortal seraph—was infected with disease and decay, unruly appetites, jealousies, rapines, and murders. Thenceforward every material organization contained in itself the elements of destruction. How shall the soul be saved, unless the body—its companion and antagonist, which bears it down—is purified? *The old substance must be transfigured*—leavened by the flesh of the Redeemer, which is free from the limitations of sin. So will the new creature, thus fed and sustained, go on from strength to strength, and at last, dropping in the gate of the grave the ‘muddy vesture’ which is death’s, stand robed in glorified form, like refined gold. Such, we doubt not, is the root-idea of the Eucharist. It was the conscious idea, not in metaphor, but in fact. As a symbolism, beautiful still. The weary fasts of the saints may be their glory or their reproach; but the same desire—however expressed—that set St. Simeon on his pillar, tunes the heart and forms the mind of the noblest of mankind,—similitude with the divine through victory, however wrought, over the fleshly lusts.

Ethics.—About this time, more writers than in any former century occupied themselves in collecting and solving what they styled *Cases of Conscience*. Their industry may have tended as freely to a wrangling spirit as to a suitable practice, but it indicates an advance along the line of moral consciousness. The moral law, in the view of Occam as in that of Scotus, is founded upon the will of God. The just and the unjust are what He has

declared to be such, by attaching to them the rewards and punishments of another life. Had His will been different, He would have sanctioned other principles than those which we are now taught to consider as the foundation of the good.

It is worthy of remark, also, that moral duties were explained, and moral precepts enforced by allegories of a new and whimsical kind, as the *Vision*, and by examples drawn from the qualities and habits of brutes. A thousand picturesque legends centre on the intimate connection of the hermit with the animal world in the lonely deserts of the East or in the vast forests of Europe.

Christianity, as the main source of the moral development of nations, has discharged its office less by the inculcation of a *system* of ethics than by the attractive influence of its perfect ideal,—the character of the Christian Founder.

Résumé.—Parliament grew steadily in power and importance. The popular element was beginning to manifest itself in government. Feudal bondage was relaxing. The spirit of freedom, which heretofore had animated only the noble and the high-born, was now inflaming the heart of the serf. There was an almost simultaneous movement of the lower orders in various countries, owing plainly to general causes affecting European society. Amalgamation of races and hard-won concessions from despotic kings were creating an independent body of freemen.

Laws were inadequately administered. Property was insecure. The dwelling of the peasant was open to plunder, without hope of redress. Poverty and ignorance hovered over the masses. Domestic virtues were but slightly felt. Ideas of feasting and defense were pushed into the foreground. Luxury was inelegant, pleasures indelicate, pomp cumbersome and unwieldy. War stood on the right, and riot on the left.

The angry, fretful spirit of the working classes was joined to a restless state on religious matters, issuing in satire and stern attack. The multiplied abuses in different branches of the Church, strongly supported indeed by the overshadowing superstition of the land, were yet at war with stubborn English instincts,—love of home, industry, and justice. Theory and practice were corrupt, and the corruption irritated the ethical sense of the few and the common sense of the many; the first result finding representation in Wycliffe, the second in Chaucer.

Every department of life was penetrated with the beliefs, or interwoven with the interests of theology. Astronomy was bewildered with astrology, chemistry ran into alchemy, philosophy traversed mechanically the region of arid abstractions, science — pursued in suspicious secrecy — wantoned in the grotesque chimeras of magical phantoms, and the physician's medicines were powerless unless the priests said prayers over them. Four chief causes were operating to emancipate the intellect from its servile submission and faith:

1. The rapid growth of the industrial classes,—at all times separated from theological tendencies.
2. The awakening of a spirit of bold inquiry.
3. The discredit fallen upon the Church on account of the rival popes.
4. The corruption of the monasteries.

Literature was affected and shaped by two generic forces,—foreign and indigenous:

1. *Classical*, wrought into Latin Christianity or translated into scholastic tomes, as a benefit of instruction, but shown chiefly and most directly in a trading-stock of semi-historical tales.

2. *Italian*, embodied in the sweet and stately measures of Dante or Petrarch and the studied prose or verse of Boccaccio, in which the spirit of the antique was seen as in a modern mirror.

3. *French*, steeped in the imagery of Southern beauty and closely connected with the over-strained sentiments of chivalry, rising to its height and dying in the translation of the *Romaunt of the Rose*.

4. *Religious*, the atmosphere, the climate, under which the literary product springs, grows, and derives its vigor of life; a perpetual irritant, arousing, with individual energy, the Teutonic conscience and the English good sense.

5. *Social*, of half-barbaric cast, violent in pride, prodigal in splendor, extravagant in its fanciful virtues, gross in its real vices.

6. *Linguistic*, able — since now almost devoid of inflections — to receive all the words of other languages that any might bring to it; open for all uses, waiting for the hand of a master-builder to consolidate and temper it.

7. *Formal*, almost exclusively poetic, and dividing itself into two schools—romantic and religious; the one following Continental models, the other reviving the laws of Saxon verse.

An age of heightened life, of wider culture, or more harmonized society, into which are born a reformer, whose call awakes the spirit of national independence and moral earnestness, and a poet—not a rhymers, but a ‘maker,’ who has something new to say, and has found the art of saying it beautifully. Against the ruder, sadder lines of Langland, which paint with terrible fidelity the hunger, toil, and misery of the poor man’s life, are the fresh, glad notes of Chaucer, which breathe the perfumed elegance and luxury of the court.

MANDEVILLE.

Now I am comen hom to reste.

Biography.—Born at St. Albans, about twenty miles north of London, in the year 1300. He studied medicine, but the globe was his home; and, at a time when the Orient was but a Land of Fairy, impelled by an irresistible desire of change and a deep religious emotion, he set forth ‘on the day of St. Michael, in the year of our Lord 1322, passed the sea, and went the way to Hierusalem, to behold the mervayles of Inde.’ With no credentials but his honorable sword, and his medical science (which might sometimes prove as perilous), he penetrated into Turkey, Persia, Armenia, India, Ethiopia, China, spending three years at Pekin; joined a Mahometan army in Palestine, served under the Sultan of Egypt; and after an absence of more than thirty years, returned, as another Ulysses, to find himself forgotten save by a few thin and withered friends of his youth, who supposed him lost and dead.

Gout and the aching of his limbs had ‘defined the end of my labor against my will, God knoweth.’ He wrote for ‘solace in his wretched rest’; then, with his thoughts ever passing beyond the equator, he set off again on another roving expedition, and overtaken with illness died at Belgium in 1371.

Writings.—*Travels*, first composed in Latin, which was afterwards translated into French, and lastly out of French into English, that ‘every man of my nation may understand it.’ The book was submitted to the pope and to ‘his wise council,’ who after a critical review ‘ratified and confirmed my book in all points.’ In this ‘true’ book are many things very untrue, but the author himself designs no imposition. With the eyes and ears of a child, he has stood in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and says:

‘Zee schull undirstonde that whan men comen to Jernsalem her first pilgrymage is to the chirche of the Holy Sepulchre wher oure Lord was buryed, that is withoute the cytee on the north syde. But it is now enclosed in with the ton wall. And there is a full fair chirche all round, and open above, and covered with leed. And on the west syde is a fair tour and an high for belles strongly made. And in the myddes of the chirche is a tabernacle as it wer a lytyll hows, made with a low lityll dore; and that tabernacle is made in maner of a half a compas right curiously and richely made of gold and azure and othere riche coloures, full nobelyche made. And in the ryght side of that tabernacle is the sepulchre of oure Lord. And the tabernacle is viij fote long and v fote wide, and xj fote in heghte. And it is not longe sithe the sepulchre was all open, that men myghte kisse it and tonche it. . . . And there is a lamp that hongeth befor the sepulchre that brenneth light, and on the Gode fryday it goth out be him self, at that hour that our Lord roos fro deth to lyve. Also within the chirche at the right side besyde the queer of the churche is the Mount of Calvarye, wher our Lord was don on the cros. And it is a roche of white coloure and a lytill medled with red. And the cros was set in a morteyns in the same roche, and on that roche dropped the woundes of our Lord, whan he was pyned on the cros, and that is cleped Golgatha. And men gon up to that Golgatha be degrees. And in the place of that morteyns was Adames hed found after Noes flode, in tokene that the synnes of Adam scholde ben bought in that same place.’

With pious artlessness, in which the marvellous delights, he relates how St. John sleeps placid and uncorrupted in abysmal gloom,—

‘God-preserved, as though a treasure,
Kept unto the waking day’;—

‘From Pathmos men gone unto Epheism, a fair citee and nyghe to the see. And there dyede Seynte Johne, and was buryed behynde the highe Awtiere, in a tounge. And there is a faire chirche. For Christene mene weren wont to holden that place alweyes. And in the tombe of Seynt John is noughte but manna, that is clept Aungeles mete. For his body was translated into Paradys. And Turkes holden now alle that place and the citee and the Chirche. And all Asie the lesse is yclept Turkye. And ye shalle undrestond, that Seynt Johne bid make his grave there in his Lyf, and leyd himself there-inne all quyk. And therefore somme men seyn, that he dyed noughte, but that he resteth there till the Day of Doom. And forsoothe there is a gret marvenle: For men may see there the erthe of the tombe apertly many tymes steren and moven, as there weren quykke thinges undre.’

A suggestion of the picturesque myth of the Seven Sleepers. So Rip Van Winkle passed twenty years slumbering in the Catskill mountains. Even Napoleon is believed among some of the French peasantry to be sleeping on in like manner.

Who has not reverted, fondly, regretfully, to the spring-time of his being, with its simple pleasures and unconscious joys, as the Eden of his individual existence? It may not be precisely defined, but it is there—the same for all—somewhere beyond the storm-line of perils and pitfalls. Even so the generations, world-worn and foot-sore, look longingly back to the ‘shady bowers, the vernal airs, the roses without thorns,’ of Paradise. None has seen it, many have sought it in vain, but all concur in the *fact*. In the imagination of the ages it is *there*,—or *was*, somewhere in the dewy morn of mortal life before the immeasurable wreck. Thus our honest traveller’s description of the locality of this delectable spot is much the same as given by men of finer genius centuries afterwards. He fairly acknowledges that he cannot speak of it properly, ‘for I was not there.’ With charming simplicity he adds:

‘The earthly Paradise, or Garden of Eden, as wise men say, is the highest point of the earth, and it is so high that it nearly touches the circle of the earth there as the moon makes her turn. And it is so high that the flood of Noah might not come to it. And Paradise is enclosed all about with a wall, and men know not whereof it is, for the wall is all covered over with moss as it seems, and it seems not that this is natural stone. . . . And you shall understand that no man that is mortal shall approach to that Paradise, for by land may no man go, for wild beasts that are in the deserts, and for the high mountains and great huge rocks that no man may pass by for the dark places there: and by the rivers no man may go, for the water runs so roughly and sharply, because it comes down so outrageously from the high places above that it runs so in great waves that no ship may run or sail against it. Many lords in past time have attempted to pass by these rivers into Paradise, with full, great companies, but they might not speed in their voyage, and many died of weariness of rowing against the strong waves, and many of them became blind or deaf by the noise of the water, and many perished that were lost in the waves. So that no mortal man may approach that place without special grace of God, and of that place I can tell you no more.’

When he relates from his own personal observation, it is no longer with the prelude of ‘men seyn.’ Of Chinese royalty he says:

‘The gret Kyng hathe every day, 50 fair Damysesles, alle Maydenes, that serven him everemore at his Mete. And whan he is at the Table, thei bryngen him hys Mete at every tyme, 5 and 5 to gedre. And in bryngynge hire Seryse, thei syngen a Song. And after that, thei kутten his Mete, and putten it in his Monthe: for he touchethe no thing ne handlethe nought, but holdethe evere more his Hondes before him, upon the Table. For he hath so longe Nayles, that he may take no thing, ne handle no thing. For the Noblesse of that Contree is to have longe Nayles, and to make hem growen alle weys to ben as longe as men may. And there ben manye in that Contree, that han hyre Nayles so longe, that thei envyrnone alle the Hond: and that is gret Noblesse. And the Noblesse of the Women, is for to have smale Feet and litille: and therefore anon as thei ben born, they leet hynde hire Feet so streyte, that thei may not growen half as nature wolde: And alle weys theise Damysesles, that I spak of beforn, syngen alle the tyme that this riche man etethe: and when that he etethe no more of his firste Cours, thaunne other 5 and 5 of faire Damysesles bryngen him his seconde Cours, alle weys syngynge, as thei

dide befor. And so thei don contynuelly, every day, to the ende of his Mete. And in this manere he ledethe his Lif. And so dide thei before him, that weren his Auncestres; and so shulle thei that comen aftre him, with outen doynge of ony Dedes of Armes: but lyven evere more thus in ese, as a Swyn, that is fedde in Sty, for to-ben made fatte.'

He enters the Valley Perilous, of which he has heard with wondering awe; and what he does not see, his horrifying fancy supplies:

'Beside that isle of the Mistorak, upon the left side, nigh to the river Phison, is a marvelous thing. There is a vale between the mountains that dureth near a four mile. And some clepen it the vale enchanted, some clepen it the vale of devils, and some clepen it the vale perilous. . . . This vale is full of devils, and hath been always. And men say there that it is one of the entries of hell. In that vale is plenty of gold and silver; wherefore many misbelieving men, and many Christian men also, gon in oftentimes, for to have of the treasure that there is, but few comen again; and namely of the misbelieving men, ne of the Christian men nouthr: for they ben anon strangled of devils.'

Naturally,—

'I was more devout then than ever I was before or after, and all for the dread of fiends that I saw in divers figures.'

He believes the earth to be round, but marvels how the antipodes, whose feet are right upwards toward us, do not fall into the firmament. The more wonderful the narrative, the deeper it sinks into the softest and richest moulds of the most germinating mind. 'The trees of the sun and of the moon,' he observes, 'are well known to have spoken to King Alexander, and warned him of his death.' In the Island of Lango, not far from Crete, he forgets not the unfortunate Lady of the Land who remained a dragoness because no one had the hardihood to kiss her lips to disenchant her. Near Bethlehem, he assures us, is the field *Floridus*, in which a fair maiden was unjustly condemned to die:

'And as the fire began to burn about her she made her prayers to our Lord, that as truly as she was not guilty He would of His merciful grace help her and make it known to all men. And when she had thus said she entered into the fire and immediately it was extinguished, and the fagots that were burning became red rose trees, and those that were not kindled became white rose trees, full of roses. *And these were the first rose trees, red and white, that ever man saw.*'

Style.—Straightforward, unpoetical, unadorned, idiomatic, drawn-out, as if the idea, to be made plain, must be driven in and clinched. These several lines are representative:

'And zee schull vnderstonde Machamete [*Mahomet*] was born in Araybe, that was first a pore knaue that kept cameles that wenten with marchantes for marchandise, and so befell that he wente with the marchantes in to Egipt, and thei were thanne cristene in tho partyes. And at the desartes of Araybe he wente in to a chapell wher a Eremyte dwelte. And whan he entered in to the chapell, that was but a lytill and a low thing, and had but a lytill dore and a low, than the entree began to waxe so gret and so large, and so high, as though it had be of gret mynstr, or the zate of a paleys.'

Rank.—An ingenuous voyager; the first example of the liberal and independent gentleman journeying over the world in pursuit of knowledge, honored wherever he went for his talents and personal accomplishments. If he was gossipy and credulous, it was because his age was so. The critic who thus comprehends him, will neither calumniate nor ridicule him. A journey over the globe at that distant day was scarcely less solemn than a departure to the realm of spirits; and, considering the circumstances under which he travelled and wrote, he must be conceded to have been a remarkable man. If he related fables, he did it honestly, while other accounts, long resting on his single and unsupported authority, have been confirmed by later discoveries,—as the burning of widows on the funeral pile of their husbands—the artificial egg-hatching in Egypt—the spheroidal form of the earth—the crocodile—the hippopotamus—the Chinese predilection for small feet—the trees which bear wool of which clothing is made.

Character.—Studious from childhood, unconquerably curious to see the unknown, courageous to wander wherever the step of man could press; a knight of spotless honor, a man of unimpeached probity, and a Christian of devoted piety. Offered in marriage a Sultan's daughter and a province, he refused both when his faith was to be exchanged for Mahometanism. He who can mourn the wickedness of his country cannot be without a large measure of those moral, affectional, and religious faculties, whose fairest, sweetest blossom is goodness. On his return to Europe, he wrote:

'In our time it may be spoken more truly than of olde, that Vertue is gone, the Church is under foote, the Clergie is in errour, the Devill reigneth, and Simonie beareth the sway.'

Influence.—By the popularity of his book, he did more, probably, than any other writer of the century, to increase the proportion of Latin and Romance words in the English vocabulary. The following are illustrative: *assembly, inflame, moisten, nation, cruelty, corner, date, defend, idol, philosopher, plainly, promise, pronounce, reconcile, temporal, publish, monster, visit, environ, conquer, reverend, spiritual.*

We, from whom the ethereal hues of that glowing day have faded (alas!), may smile at his budget of wonders, but to the

spirit of such we owe perhaps the map of the world and the intercourse of nations. His *Travels* will always remain a deeply interesting monument of the thought of the period.

WYCLIFFE.

Honored of God to be the first Preacher of a general Reformation to all Europe.—*Milton.*

Biography.—Son of a country squire, born 1324, in the little village of Wycliffe—the *cliff by the water*. Entered Oxford at sixteen, where he distinguished himself in logic and theology. In 1361, he was elected Master of Balliol, and in that year was presented by his college to the rectory of Fylingham. Four years later, he was appointed Warden of Canterbury Hall, and, as the champion of the State, threw himself into the stormy disputes between Romanism and the government. Armed with the degree of Doctor of Divinity, he began in a wooden hall, roughly plastered and roofed with thatch, to lecture on divinity, boldly assailing the practices of the Church. His fame in 1374 led to his selection as one of an embassy to Bruges, to remonstrate against the tribute-claims of the papacy, whose demands, amid the social troubles from pestilence, from the cost of war, and from the strife between capital and labor, rose ever higher. Obtaining some concessions from the pope, he was rewarded with the rectorship of Lutterworth, which was afterwards his chief residence. Identity of political views had allied him with the powerful John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, who was eager to drive the prelates from office and to seize their wealth. He had said that church property, like other, might be employed for national purposes, and had exhorted the clergy to return to their original poverty. These offences were not to be forgiven. On the 19th of February, 1377, his grey beard sweeping to his breast, his belted robe flowing to his feet, his white staff firmly in his thin hand, he appeared before the Bishop of London, to answer for heresy. By his side were Lancaster and the Marshal of England. There was no trial. A howling mob, to whom the Duke as the leader of the baronage was

unpopular, dissolved the meeting. The hearts of the monks burned to smite him down; and again, at the close of the ensuing year, he was summoned to the Capitol. Supported by the Crown and the people, he bore himself defiantly and returned to Oxford in peace. 'It is not possible,' he asserted, 'that a man should be excommunicated to his damage, unless he were first and principally excommunicated by himself.' In his chamber, where he lay at the point of death, eight men urged him to recant. When they had done, he rose by help of his servant, and, 'holding them with his glittering eye,' cried: 'I shall not die, but live; and again declare the evil deeds of the friars!' In 1381, deserted and alone, he openly inveighed against the doctrine of transubstantiation. The university, panic-stricken, first condemned him, then tacitly adopted his cause. In the presence of his class, he had challenged a refutation of his conclusions, and was commanded by Lancaster to be silent, to which he replied: 'I believe that in the end the truth will conquer.' His courage had restored confidence: but turning from the rich and learned, he appealed to England at large, and, from being a schoolman, became a pamphleteer. His enemies were persistent. Of twenty-four propositions, carefully collated from his works, a council solemnly decreed ten to be heretical and the rest erroneous. Alarmed by the Peasant Revolt and the attitude of the barons, Richard II, to strengthen his position by an alliance with the Church, issued a royal order of expulsion from the university; and Wycliffe, silenced at Oxford, retired to the hovels of Lutterworth, where he forged the great weapon of future warfare against the triumphant hierarchy,—the *English Bible*. Summoned to appear at Rome, his failing strength inspired the sarcastic reply:

'I am always glad to explain my faith to any one, and above all to the Bishop of Rome; for I take it for granted that if it be orthodox he will confirm it; if it be erroneous, he will correct it. . . . Now Christ during his life upon earth was of all men the poorest, casting from Him all worldly authority. I deduce from these premises, as a simple counsel of my own, that the Pope should surrender all temporal authority to the civil power, and advise his clergy to do the same.'

The terrible strain on his energies enfeebled by age and study had induced paralysis, and a final stroke while he was hearing mass in his parish church was followed a day or two later by his quiet death, December 31, 1384. The lips of malice pursued him with redoubled fury; and, besides assuring the people of

his eternal damnation, took care to represent his malady as the visible judgment of Heaven for his heresies.¹

Writings.—An incredible number of sermons, letters, tracts, and treatises, in Latin and English, asserting collectively and essentially:

1. All power is of God. Hence the royal is as sacred as the ecclesiastical. The king is as truly His vicar as is the Pope.

2. Each individual holds the dominion of his conscience, not of a mediating priesthood, but immediately of his Creator, who is the tribunal of personal appeal.

3. The bread in the Eucharist is not the real body of Christ, but only its sign.

4. The Roman Church has no true claim to headship over other churches.

5. Temporal privileges cannot be exacted or defended by spiritual censures.

6. Ecclesiastical courts should be subject to the civil.

7. The clergy ought not to possess temporal wealth; they should be maintained by the free alms of their flocks.

8. Pilgrimages and image-worship are akin to idolatry.

9. Priests have no power to absolve from sin.

10. The Bible is the one ground of faith, and it is the right of every man to examine it for himself.

What a result for the fourteenth century! What a promise for the renovated head and heart of the sixteenth! Religion must be secularized—no longer forestalled—and purged from indulgences and rosaries. Let each hear and read for himself. To this end, let God's word quit the learned schools and the dusty shelves of the monastery. To the mass it is a sealed book, locked up in a dead and foreign tongue, covered with a confusion of commentaries and Fathers. How far it is corrupted by the traditions and devices of men, we know not till we see it in the simple speech of the market and the fireside:

'Ech place of holy writ, both opyn and derk, techith mekenes and charite; and therefore he that kepith mekenes and charite hath the trewe undirstondyng and perfection of al holi writ. . . . Therefore no simple man of wit be aferd unmesurabli to studie in the text of holy writ.'

¹ The impartial historian of opinions must be early impressed with the mournful truth that all religions agree in forever rewarding the believer and forever damning the one who doubts or denies,—the heretic. Under the great laws of eternal development, are we not all heretics?

In this spirit, Protestant Wycliffe translates the Testament, Old and New, which men will consult, not for amusement, but to find in it their doom of life and death, and to learn a new worship, without the rites that smother a living piety beneath external forms.

Style.—Rugged, homely, sometimes slovenly; but always clear, terse, vehement, stinging, as if feeling ever the galling shackles of spiritual despotism. The mind intent upon the eternal tragedy of the conscience is disdainful of elegance.

Rank.—In the immense range of his intellectual power, he stood in Oxford without a rival. Like Bacon, Scotus, and Occam, an audacious partisan; unlike them, a dexterous politician. The organizer of a religious order, the founder of our later English prose; first of the great Reformers and last of the great Scholastics. The grandeur of his position is marked, as well by the reluctance to adopt extreme measures against him, as by the admission of a contemporary and opponent, who acknowledged him to be ‘the greatest theologian of the day, second to none as a philosopher, and incomparable as a schoolman.’ To be the first, amidst a host of prejudices and errors, to strike out into a new and untried way, indicates a genius above the common order.

Character.—Devout, benevolent, austere; a man of sterling sense, of amazing industry, of ardent zeal, with the stout-heartedness that dared be singular for God and the right. Altogether a brave and admirable spirit, open to the divine significance of life; seeing through the show of things, believing in the truth of things, and striking with the poets, in a troublous period, the first blow of demolition against an ancient thing grown false, preparatory afar off to a new thing.

Influence.—To Wycliffe is due the establishment of a sacred dialect, which, with slight variation, as will appear below in his version of the first chapter of the *Gospel of St. Mark*, has continued to be the language of devotion to the present day:

‘1. The bigynnyng of the gospel of Jhesu Crist, the sone of God.

2. As it is writun in Ysaie, the prophete, Lo! I send myn angel bifore thi face, that schal make thi weye redy before thee.

3. The voyce of oon cryng in desert, Make ye redy the weye of the Lord, make ye his pathis rihtful.

4. John was in desert baptisyng, and preching the baptyſm of penance, into remysioun of synnes.

5. And alle men of Jernsalem wenten out to him and al the cuntree of Judee; and weren baptisid of him in the flood of Jordan, knowleching her synnes.

6. And John was clothid with heeris of camelis, and a girdil of skyn abowte his leendis; and he oet locusts, and hony of the wode, and prechide, seyinge:

7. A strengere than I schal come aftir me, of whom I knelinge am not worthi for to vndo, or *vnbynde*, the thwong of his schoon.

8. I have baptisid you in water: forsothe he shall baptise you in the Holy Goost.' . . .

He and his school introduced or popularized many Latin and Romance terms; and thus enriched literary diction by enriching that of familiar currency, from which the Shakespeares draw their stock of living and breathing words.

He accomplished a work which no ecclesiastical censure could set aside. The period was eminently favorable to a successful revolt through a general spirit of disaffection to the pope. Men of rank became his adherents. The learned of Oxford were his apostles. Wandering scholars carried his writing into Bohemia, and disseminated his principles. Lollardism spread through every class of society, a floating mass of religious and social discontent. The grave nor persecution could extinguish the new forces of thought and feeling which were breaking through the crust of feudalism. His Bible was proscribed; his votaries, as will presently appear, were imprisoned and burned; but the seed had been dropped, and was rooted in the soil. Thirty years hence the vultures of the law will ungrave him, and consuming to ashes what little they can find, will cast it into the brook that runs hard by, thinking thus to make away both with his bones and his doctrines; but —

‘As thou these ashes, little brook, wilt bear
Into the Avon — Avon to the tide
Of Severn — Severn to the narrow seas —
Into main ocean they — this deed accurst
An emblem yields to friends and enemies,
How the bold teacher’s doctrine, sanctified
By truth, shall spread throughout the world dispersed.’

When the ‘simple preachers’ have slumbered a century and a half, their day of triumph will be at hand. The age, though strongly disposed, is not yet ripe for revolution. Reforms ordained to be permanent are of slow growth.

CHAUCER.

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath
 Preluded those melodious bursts that fill
 The spacious times of great Elizabeth
 With sounds that echo still.—*Tennyson*.

Biography.—Born in London, 1328,—‘the city of London, that is to me so dear and sweet in which I was forth-grown’; studied at Cambridge, then at Oxford; acquired all branches of scholastic and elegant literature, Latin, Italian, English, and French; was page in the royal household; served in the army, was taken prisoner in France; again at the court of Edward III, the most splendid in Europe, surrounded by the wit, beauty, and gallantry of chivalry; marries the queen’s maid of honor, wondering that Heaven had fashioned such a being,—

‘And in so little space
 Made such a body, and such face;
 So great beauty and such features
 More than be in other creatures!’

thus brother-in-law of the heir apparent to the throne, Duke of Lancaster, strengthening their political bond by a family alliance; an ambassador in open or secret missions to Florence, Genoa, Flanders; takes part in pomps of France and Milan; converses with Petrarch, perhaps with Boccaccio and Froissart; is high up and low down,—now a placeholder, now disgraced, now the admired of the Court, now an exile dreading to see the face of a stranger, now incarcerated in the Tower, and again basking in the sunshine of kingly favor; at one time occupied with ceremonies and processions, at another secluded in his lovely retreat at Woodstock; finally, weary of the hurry and turmoil of the varied and brilliant world, retiring to the country quiet of Donnington Castle; then, bowed beneath the weight of years, dying in Palace-yard on the 25th of October, 1400,—his earthly friendship dissolved,—himself the only withered leaf upon a stately branch. He was the first buried in what is now famous as the Poets’ Corner of Westminster Abbey.

What an education was that, with its splendor, varieties, contrasts! What a stage for the mind and eyes of an artist!

Appearance.—Of middle stature, late in life inclining to

corpulency,—a point upon which the Tabard host takes occasion to jest with him:

‘Now ware you, sirs, and let this man have place;
He in the waist is shaped as well as I;
This were a poppet in armes to embrace.’

Of full face, indicative of health and serenity; of fair complexion, verging towards paleness; of dusky yellow hair, short and thin, with small round-trimmed beard; of aquiline nose, of expansive marble-like forehead, and drooping eyes,—a peculiarity likewise noticed by the host:

‘“What man art thou,” quoth he,
“That lookest as thou wouldest find a hare?
Forever on the ground I see thee stare.”’

His ordinary dress consisted of a loose frock of camlet, reaching to the knee, with wide sleeves fastened at the wrist; a dark hood, with *tippet*, or tail, which indoors hung down his back, and outdoors was twisted round his head; bright-red stockings, and black, horned shoes.

Diction.—As to the ancient accentuation, we are much in the dark. Certainly it was not in all respects like that of our own day. It is slightly different even in Shakespeare and his contemporaries from what it now is. For example, *aspect*, which in their time was always accented on the last syllable, is now accented on the first. A short composition is now called an *essay*, but a century ago it was called an *essáy*. Thus Pope,—

‘And write next winter móre essáys on mán.’

At an earlier period, this change was much more active. There was no recognized standard of accidence, and the modes of spelling, as of emphasis, were extremely irregular. It will render the approach to Chaucer’s poetry easier, to remember:

1. That the Romance canons of verse, which were adopted as the laws of poetical composition, tended to throw the stress of voice upon the final syllable, contrary to the Saxon articulation, which inclined to emphasize the initial syllable. Hence the pronunciation would oscillate between the two systems. Thus Chaucer has *lángage* in one line, *langáge* in another, as the verse may require.

2. The *ed* at the end of verbs, and the *es*, when it is the plural or possessive termination of a noun, should generally be sounded as distinct syllables.

3. The presence of their Anglo-Saxon root is often denoted by an *n* at the end of words; as, 'Thou shalt *ben* quit' (be), '*withouten* doubt' (without), 'I shall you *tellen*' (tell).

4. Not infrequently two negatives are used; as, 'I *n*'ill *nat* go' (will not), 'I *n*'am *nat* sure' (am not), 'I *ne* owe hem *not* a word' (do not owe).

5. Forms of the personal pronouns are exhibited in the following declension:

<i>Sing.</i>	<i>1st person.</i>	<i>2d person.</i>	<i>3d person.</i>		
Nom.	I, ic	thou	he	she	hit, it
Gen.	min, mi	thin, thi	his	hire, hir	his
Acc.	me	the, thee	him	hir, hire	hit, it
<i>Plural.</i>					
Nom.	we	ye	the, they		
Gen.	our, oure	youre, your	here		
Acc.	us	you	hem.		

6. Final *e* (with us totally inoperative upon the syllabication) is usually pronounced,—silent before *h* or a vowel; as *Aprillë*, *swootë*.

Chaucer's position, so far as we know, has no parallel in literary history. His poems are not in a foreign language—hardly in our own. They present to the eye terms that are familiar, and terms that are uncouth. The use of a glossary is wearisome; the intermingling of sunshine and shadow, in which the reader is uncertain how long the clearness will continue, and how soon the obscurity will recur, is vexatious. He is the star of a misty morning.

Versification.—Chaucer composed several pieces in octosyllabic metre—iambic tetrameter; but by far the most considerable part of his poetry was written in our present heroic measure—iambic pentameter in rhymed couplets or stanzas. In practice, spondees (- -), trochees (- ∪), and anapæsts (∪ ∪ -) are often introduced. To vary the *position* of the accents prevents monotony; to reduce their *number*, as from five to four, quickens the movement of the line. A line may be catalectic—wanting a syllable; or hypercatalectic—lengthened by a syllable or even two, which gives a lifting billowy rhythm. By a little attention to the law of the verse, the difficulties of pronunciation will greatly diminish, and the air of archaism will rather enhance the effect. Thus of the death of Arcite:

‘And with that wórd his spéche faíle gán;
 For fró his feíte up toó his brést was cóme
 The còld of déth that hádde him óvernóme
 And yét moreóver ín his ármes twoó
 The vítal stréngth is lóst, and ál agoó.
 Ónly the íntellect, withóuten móre,
 That dwélléd ín his héрте sík and sóre,
 Gan fáyle wén the héрте félte déth.’

[overtaken]

The poet himself seems anxious that transcribers and reciters should not violate his *metre*. Thus, gracefully bidding adieu to a finished poem, he adds:

‘And for there is so grete dyversite
 In English and in writynge of our tonge,
 So preye I God that non miswrite thee
 Ne thee *nismetre* for defante of tonge.’

His stanza—called *rhyme royal*, from the circumstance of its being used by a royal follower—was formed from the Italian octave rhyme by the omission of the fifth line. It thus consists of seven lines, three on each side of a middle one, which is the last of a quatrain of alternate rhymes, and first of a quatrain of couplets. Thus:

“‘Nay, God forbede a lover shulde channge!”
 The turtel seyde, and wex for shame al reed;
 “Though that hys lady evermore be strange,
 Yet let hym serve hir ever, tyl he be deed.
 Forsoth, I preyse noght the gooses reed;
 For though she deyed, I wolde noon other make;
 I wol ben hirs til that the deth me take.”’

It remained a favorite with English poets down to the reign of Elizabeth.

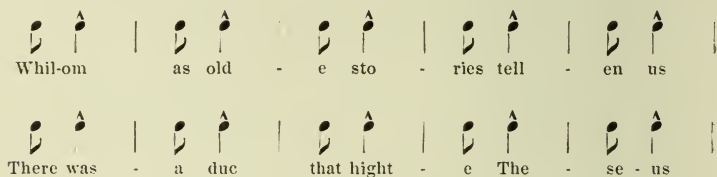
In rhythmic history, Langland terminates the ancient period, and Chaucer begins the modern. The first presents the Anglo-Saxon type $\frac{3}{8}$ ♪ ♪ ♪, but with the accent at the second time-unit of the bar instead of the first. Thus:

$\frac{3}{8}$	♪	♪	♪	↑		♪	♪	♪	↑		♪	♪	♪	↑		♪	♪	♪	↑	
	In	a	som	-		er	se	-	son		whan	soft	was		the	son	-	ne		

♪	♪	♪	↑		♪	♪	♪	↑		♪	♪	♪	↑		♪	♪	♪	↑		
I	shop	-	e		me	in	shron	-	es		as		I	a	shep	-	e	wer	-	e

The second presents the same, with the last two of the eighth-notes joined together into a quarter-note; as if in music we should write ♪ — ♪, where the slur — unites two sounds in one

precisely equivalent to f . Hence for the predominant form $\frac{3}{8} \text{f} \text{f} \text{f}$, we have the predominant form $\frac{3}{8} \text{f} \text{f} \text{f}$. Thus:



Writings.—Like all the rest, Chaucer begins as a copyist, and, turning with greatest sympathy to those in whom the romantic element is strongest, translates the *Romaunt of the Rose*, an allegorical love poem, built up by the troubadours into colossal proportions, one of the most famous in the fashionable literature of the time. Under the figure of a rose in a delicious garden, it portrays the trials of a lover, who in the attainment of his desire, has to traverse vast ditches, scale lofty walls, and force the gates of castles. These enchanted fortresses are inhabited by visible divinities, some of whom assist and some oppose. The garden itself is enclosed with embattled masonry, whereon are the emblematic Hatred, Avarice, Envy, Sorrow, Old Age, and Hypocrisy. Within are the smiling dancers, and, by way of contrast, Danger, who starts suddenly from an ambuscade, and sad Travail, who forever mingles with the merry company. All this, as usual, is seen in a dream, a dream of May, with its mantling green and gladsome melody of birds:

‘That it was May me thoughten tho, [then
 It is five year or more ago,
 That it was May thus dreamed me
 In time of love and jollity. . . .
 And then becometh the ground so proud
 That it woll have a newe shrowd,
 And make so quaint his robe and fair
 That it had hews an hundred pair,
 Of grass and floures Ind and Pers, [Indian, Persian
 And many hewes full diverse. . . .
 The birdes, that han left their song
 While they had suffered cold full strong
 In weathers gril, and derk to sight, [dreary
 Been in May for the sunne bright
 So glad, that they shew in singing
 That in their heart is such liking,
 That they mote singen and been light. . . .
 Then younge folk intenden aye

For to been gay and amorous,
 The time is then so savourous.
 Hard is his heart that loveth nought
 In May, when all this mirth is wrought,
 When he may on these branches hear
 The smale birdes singen clear
 Their blissful swete song pitous.'

Under the influence of the prevalent taste for novelty and splendor, he writes the *House of Fame*, known to modern readers chiefly through Pope's paraphrase, bearing the statelier title of the 'Temple of Fame.' Chaucer is transported in a dream to the Temple of Venus, which is of glass, in a wide waste of sand, and on whose walls are figured in gold all the legends of Virgil and Ovid. Dante's eagle, glittering like a carbuncle, looks on him from the sun:

'That faste by the sonne, as hye
 As kenne myght I with myn eye,
 Me thought I sawgh an egle sore,
 But that hit semede moche more
 Then I had any egle seyne. . . .
 Hit was of golde and shone so bryght,
 That never sawgh man such a syght.'

Suddenly the eagle descends with lightning wing, and, bearing him aloft in his talons above the stars, drops him at last before the House of Fame, built of polished beryl, and standing on a rock of almost inaccessible ice. All the southern side is covered with the names of famous men—perpetually melting away! The northern side is alike graven, but the names, here shaded, remain. All around, on the turrets, are the minstrels, with Orpheus, Arion, and the renowned harpers. Behind them are myriad musicians, then charmers, magicians, and prophets. He enters, and at the upper end of the hall, paved and roofed with gold, and embossed with gems, sees Fame seated on a throne of carbuncle, a 'gret and noble quene,' amidst an infinite number of heralds, robed nobles, and crowned heads. From her throne to the gate stretches a row of pillars, on which stand the great historians and poets. The palace rings with the sounds of instruments, and the celestial melody of Calliope and her seven sisters, in eternal praise of the goddess. People of every nation and condition crowd the hall to present their claims. Some ask fame for their good works, and are denied good or bad fame. Others who merit well, are trumpeted by Slander. A few obtain their just reward. Some, who have done nobly, desire their good works

to be hidden, and their request is granted. Others make request, and their deeds are trumpeted through clarion of gold. Chaucer himself refuses to be a petitioner. Enough that he best knows what he has suffered, and what thought. He is then carried by the eagle to the House of Rumor, sixty miles long and perpetually whirling. Made of twigs like a cage, it admits every sound. Its doors, more numerous than forest leaves, stand ever ajar. Thence issue tidings of every description, like fountains and rivers from the sea, flying first to Fame, who gives them name and duration. Would you know how the waves of air perambulate the oceans of space—how the lightest word speeds unerringly to its destination, and mayhap in the Hereafter will vibrate still in the speaker's ear—how the atmosphere we breathe may be the ever-living witness of the sentiments we have uttered? Listen:

'Sound is naught but air that's broken,
 And every speeche that is spoken,
 Whe'er loud or low, foul or fair,
 In his substance is but air:
 For as flame is but lighted smoke,
 Right so is sound but air that's broke. . . .
 Now, henceforth, I will thee teach
 However, speeche, voice or sown,
 Through his multiplicion,
 Though it were piped of a mouse,
 Must needs come to Fame's House.
 I prove it thus; taketh heed now
 By experience, for if that thou
 Throw in a water now a stone,
 Well wot'st thou it will make anon
 A little roundel as a circle,
 Par venture as broad as a covercle,
 And right anon thou shalt see well
 That circle cause another wheel,
 And that the thirde, and so forth, brother,
 Every circle causing other,
 Much broader than himselfen was:
 Right so of air, my leve brother,
 Ever each air another stirreth
 More and more, and speech npbeareth,
 Till it be at the House of Fame.'

The occupants of this house—chiefly sailors, pilgrims, and pardoners—are continually employed in hearing or telling news, inventing and circulating reports and lies. In one corner, the poet sees a throng of eager listeners around a narrator of love-stories. The uproar about this shadow of himself wakes him from his dream.

Grand suggestiveness here, true strokes of the Gothic imagi-

nation. Pass away the highest things! There are no eternal corner-stones. All things that have been in this place of hope, all that are or will be in it, earth's wonder and her pride, have to vanish,—rising only to melt in air and be no more!

Amid all this exuberancy, love is the sovereign passion. As we have seen, it has the force of law. It is inscribed in a code, combined with religion, confounding morality with pleasure, displaying the fatal excess and pedantry of the age. From his sojourn beneath Italian skies, Chaucer returns with his Northern brain powerfully stimulated, and, with close attention to his originals, writes the story of *Troilus and Creseide*, in which the well-loved visions wear a more tangible form, and mingle in a more consecutive history, than in the hazy distance of allegory. It is a tale of Troy told in the Middle Ages. A Trojan seer, warned by Apollo that Troy must fall, deserts to the Greeks, leaving behind him in the beleaguered city his beautiful daughter Creseide, overwhelmed with grief at her father's treachery. Troilus, valorous brother of Hector, sees her in the temple, clad in mourning, and loves:

'And when that he in chaumber was allon, He down upon his beddes feet him sette, And thought ay on hire so, withouten lette That as he satt and woke, his spirit mette That he hire saugh, and temple, and al the wyse Right of hire loke, and gan it new avise.'	[ceasing [fancied [manner [consider
--	--

Like Dante, he is reticent, would languish and die in silence but for Pandarus, her uncle, who persuades him to disclose the name of his love and promises to forward his suit. Troilus is born anew—an invincible knight, yet gentle, generous, and sincere; his cruelty, his levity, his haughty carriage, all gone; of so gentle manner,—

'That each him loved that looked in his face.'

Pandarus seeks his niece, with the comforting adieu,—

'Give me this labour and this business,
And of my speed be thine all the sweetness.'

He prevails upon her to pity his friend, takes his leave 'glad and well gone.' As she sits alone in troubled meditation, a shout in the street proclaims the victorious advance of Troilus, who, omnipotent in hope, has put the Greeks to flight, and comes a conquering hero. She sees his triumph, marks his modest demeanor,—

‘And let it in her heart so softly sink
That to herself she said, “Ho! give me drink.”’

She blushes, drops her head, thinks of his prowess, his estate, his fame,—above all, of his distress; almost decides that she will love, then thinks of the woes of love:

‘For love is yet the moste stormy life
Right of himself that ever was begun,
For ever some mistrust or nice strife [foolish
There is in love some cloud over the sun;
Thereto we wretched women nothing conne, [can do
When ns is woe, but weep, and sit, and think:
Our wreak is this, our owne woe to drink.’ [revenge

Troilus, in wasting suspense, asks his friend, just returned, ‘Shall I weep or sing?’ Assured of her friendly regard, he fears his heart will leap forth, ‘it spreadeth so for joy’:

‘But, Lord, how shall I doen? how shall I liven?
When shall I next my own dear heart ysee?
How shall this longe time away be driven
Till that thou be again at her from me?
Thou may’st answer, “Abide, abide”; but he
That hangeth by the neck, the soth to sain,
In great disease abideth for the pain.’ [discomfort

In answer, Pandarus recommends him to write a letter, and furthermore, to ride, as it were accidentally, by her house, when he will take care that she shall be at the window engaged in conversation with himself,—the subject the man whom he desires to serve. When the letter is brought, she is ashamed to open it, and consents only when told the poor knight is about to die. When asked how she likes it, ‘all rosy hued then waxeth she’; refuses, however, to answer it, but yields at length to the importunities of her uncle, and writes that she will feel for him the affection of a sister:

‘She thanked him of all that he well meant
Towardes her, but holden him in hand
She woulde not, ne maken herself bond
In love, but as his sister him to please,
She would aye fain to do his heart an ease.’

When the messenger arrives, Troilus trembles, pales, doubts his happiness. All night long he ponders how he may best merit her favor. Slowly, after many heart-aches, and much stratagem on the part of Pandarus, he obtains her delicate confession:

‘And as the new abashed nightingale,
That stinteth first, when she beginneth sing,
When that she heareth any herdes tale, [shepherd’s call

Or in the hedges any wight stirring;
 And after, siker doth her voice out ring;— [more boldly
 Right so Creseid', when that her dread stent, [ceased
 Opened her heart, and told him her intent.'

Of their delight, judge 'ye that have been at the feast of such gladness!' They exchange rings, and part, vowing eternal constancy. As to him,—

'In alle nedes for the townes war
 He was, and aye the first in armes dight, [clad
 And certainly, but if that bookes err,
 Save Hector most idread of any wight;
 And this encrease of hardiness and might
 Come him of love his lady's thank to win, [reward
 That altered his spirit so within.'

All day long she sings:

'Whom should I thanken but you, god of love,
 Of all this blisse, in which to bathe I ginne?
 And thanked be ye, lorde, for that I love,
 This is the right life that I am inne, [banish
 To flemen all maner vice and sinne:
 This doth me so to vertue for to entende
 That daie by daie I in my will amende.
 And who that saith that for to love is vice, . . .
 He either is envious, or right nice,
 Or is unmightie for his shrudnesse
 To loven. . . .
 But I with all mine herte and all my might,
 As I have saied, woll love unto my last,
 My owne dere herte, and all mine owne knight,
 In whiche mine herte growen is so fast,
 And his in me, that it shall ever last.'

'But all too little, welaway! lasteth such joy.' A truce between the two armies is struck. Her father Calchas reclaims her. Told that she is to be exchanged for a prisoner, she swoons, and Troïlus, thinking her dead, cries:

'O cruel Jove! and thou Fortune adverse!
 This all and some is, falsely have ye slain
 Creseid', and sith ye may do me no worse,
 Fie on your might and workes so diverse!
 Thus cowardly ye shall me never win;
 There shall no death me from my lady twin.' [separate

Love sports with death when it makes the whole of life. With his sword unsheathed, he calls upon the loved and lost to receive his spirit:

'But as God would, of swoon she then abraid, [awaked
 And gan to sigh, and "Troïlus!" she cried;
 And he answered: "Lady mine, Creseid!"
 Liven ye yet?" and let his sword down glide.
 "Yea, hearte mine! that thanked be Cupid,"

(Quod she) and therewithal she sore sight, [sighed]
And he began to glad her as he might;

Took her in armes two, and kiss'd her oft,
And her to glad he did all his intent,
For which her ghost, that flickered aye aloft,
Into her woful heart again it went;
But at the last, as that her even glent [glanced]
Aside, anon she 'gan his sword espy
As it lay bare, and 'gan for fear to cry.

And asked him why he had it out draw?
And Troilus anon the cause her told,
And how himself therewith he would have slaw; [slain]
For which Creseid' upon him 'gan behold,
And 'gan him in her armes fast to fold,
And said; "O mercy, God! lo which a deed!
Alas! how nigh we weren bothe dead!"

Separated at last, he despairs, hears the 'bird of night' shriek, arranges for his sepulture, bequeaths to his lady the ashes of his heart in a golden urn; is exhorted to calm himself, bidden remember that he is a knight, that others—the wisest and best—have been separated from their lovers, and are so every day, even forever; goes reluctantly with Pandarus to a royal banquet, to forget his sorrow, but amid the revelry of beauty, wit, and wealth, sees and hears only the absent:

'On her was ever all that his heart thought,
Now this now that so fast imagining
That gladden, iwis, can him no feasting.'

Alone he murmurs:

'Who seeth you now, my right lodestar?
Who sitteth now or stant in your presence?
Who can comforten now your heartes war,
Now I am gone? whom give ye audience?
Who speaketh for me now in my absence?
Alas! no wight, and that is all my care,
For well wote I, as ill as I ye fare. . . .
O lovesome lady bright!
How have ye fared since that ye were there?
Welcome iwis, mine owne lady dear! . . .
Every thing came him to remembrance
As he rode forth by places of the town
In which he whilome had all his pleasance;
Lo! yonder saw I mine own lady dance,
And in that temple with her eyen clear
Me captive caught first my right lady dear:
And yonder have I heard full lustily
My dear heart Creseid' laugh, and yonder play
Saw I her ones eke full blissfully,
And yonder ones to me 'gan she say,
"Now, goode sweet! loveth me well I pray";

And yond so goodly 'gan she me behold
That to the death my heart is to her hold:

And at the corner in the yonder house
Heard I mine alderlevest lady dear
So womanly with voice melodious
Singen so well, so goodly and so clear,
That in my soule yet me think'th I hear
The blissful sound, and in that yonder place
My lady first me took unto her grace.'

[*sweetest*]

She—with what words and what tears!—has prayed that body and soul might sink into the bottomless pit ere she prove false to Troilus, and has pledged that in ten days she will come back. But Fortune seems truest when she will beguile:

'From Troilus she 'gan her brighte face
Away to writhe, and took of him no heed,
And cast him clean out of his lady's grace
And on her wheel she set up Diomed.'

Creseide through sheer weakness yields to the pleading of Diomed. In vain Troilus appeals to her in the tenderest of letters, and bewails his woe in endless rhymes. He accepts the inevitable then, in a last piteous reproach:

'O lady mine, Creseid!
Where is your faith, and where is your behest?
Where is your love? where is your truth?'

There is nothing left. Light and life are stricken from the world:

'And certainly, withouten more speech,
From hennes forth, as farforth as I may,
Mine owne death in armes will I seech,
I ne recke not how soone be the day:
But truely, Creseide, sweete May!
Whom I have aye with all my might iserved,
That ye thus done I have it not deserved.'

Courting death, he throws himself upon the Greeks, thousands of whom perish; seeks Diomed everywhere, wounds him, but is himself slain by the spear of the invincible Achilles. Borne up to the seventh sphere, he looks compassionately down upon this little spot of earth, and esteems it vanity. Wherefore,—

'O young and freshe folkes, he or she!
In which that love up groweth with your age,
Repaireth home from worldly vanity,
And of your hearts up casteth the visage
To thilke God that after his image
You made, and thinketh all n'is but a fair,
This world that passeth soon, as flow'res fair.'

There is improvement here. The worldly view tempers the sentimental element. Chaucer, still in sympathy with the de-

mand of the age for excessive sensation, is growing into manhood, and winning liberty. His joy in the poetry of others gives way to his desire to render it purer, simpler, more beautiful, and more true. As knowledge and learning increase, these fantastic beings, these exquisite refinements, which make the evening hours of the lord flow sweetly, give way to real manners and living characters.

The popular excursion of the day is the pilgrimage, and the most famous is that to the shrine of the martyred Becket¹ at Canterbury. Persons of every condition meet in the month of April and travel together, starting from a London Inn. Social distinctions are for the time disregarded, partly from the religious sense, of which the occasion is suggestive, that all men are equal before God; but chiefly from the common disposition of chance companions to put off restraint, and relieve, by friendly interchange, the tediousness of solitary and dangerous travel. The occasion is not too solemn for mirth, even coarse and vigorous; for since the Devil is thwarted by the object of the mission, it is not at all necessary to maintain any strictness by the wayside. Chaucer seizes upon this custom as the frame in which to set his immortal pictures of life—the *Canterbury Tales*. Bound for the tomb of the illustrious saint, he joins at the ‘Tabard’ a troop of pilgrims, twenty-nine in number. They set out in early morning, accompanied by the merry host, who is the presiding spirit of the party. To beguile the plodding ride through the miry highways, it is agreed that each shall tell at least one story on the journey and another on the return,—

‘For trewely comfort ne mirthe is none
To riden by the way domb as the stone.’

All the great classes of English humanity are represented,—a knight, a lawyer, a doctor, an Oxford student, a miller, a prioress, a monk, carpenters, farmers,—all in hearty human fellowship. The stories related are as various as the characters of the narrators, and comprehend the whole range of middle-age poetry,—chivalric, vulgar, grave, gay, pathetic, humorous, moral, and licentious.

The knight, bronzed by the Syrian sun, leads us among arms, palaces, temples, tournaments, and glittering barbaric kings.

¹ The Saxon archbishop, murdered, it will be remembered, by the minions of Henry II.

Palamon and Arcite, the heroes of the story, are lovers of the fair Emily, and in a forest solitude fight in deadly combat:

‘The brighte swordes wenten to and fro
So hideously that with the leaste stroke
It seemed that it woulde fell an oak.’

But the king, whose delight is the chase, accidentally discovers them,—

‘And at a start, he was betwixt them two,
And pulled out a sword and cried,—“Ho!”’

He orders that fifty weeks hence each shall bring a hundred knights to contest his claim — Emily to wed the victor:

‘Who looketh lightly now but Palamon?
Who springeth up for joye but Arcite?
Who could it tell, or who could it indite,
The joye that it maked in the place
When Theseus hath done so fair a grace?’

He prepares at fabulous expense a magnificent theatre, a mile in circuit, walled with stone, graduated sixty paces high, adorned with altars and oratories of alabaster, gold, and coral. Wrought on the wall of the temple of Venus, ‘full piteous to behold,’ are —

‘The broken sleepes, and the sikes cold [sighs
The sacred teares, and the waimentings, [lamentations
The fiery strokes of the desirings,
That Loves servants in this life enduren,
The oathes that their covenants assuren.’

Within the fane of mighty Mars,—

‘First on the wall was painted a forest,
In which there wonneth neither man nor beast, [dwelleth
With knotty gnarry barren trees old
Of stubbes sharp and hidous to behold,
In which there ran a rumble and a swough, [swooning noise
As though a storm should bursten every bough;
And downward from a hill under a bent [declivity
There stood the Templ’ of Mars Armipotent,
Wrought all of burned steel, of which th’ entree [burnished
Was long and strait, and ghastly for to see;
And thereont came a rage and such a vise [rush
That it made all the gates for to rise.
The northern light in at the doore shone,
For window on the wall ne was there none
Through which men mighten any light discern:
The door was all of adamant etern,
Yclenched overthwart and endelong
With iron tough, and for to make it strong,
Every pillar the temple to sustain
Was tonne-great, of iron bright and sheen.’ [shining

Within the gloomy sanctuary,—

‘There saw I first the dark imagining
Of Felony, and all the compassing;
The cruel ire, red as any glede, [burning coal
The pickpurse, and eke the pale drede [fear
The smiler with the knife under the cloak;
The shepen burning with the black smoke; [stable
The treason of the murdering in the bed;
The open war, with woundes all bebled;
Conteke with bloody knife and sharp menace: [strife
All full of chirking was that sorry place. [hateful sound
The slayer of himself yet saw I there,
His heartes blood hath bathed all his hair;
The nail ydriven in the shode on height; [hair on the head
The colde death, with mouth gaping upright.’

Here,—

‘The statue of Mars upon a carte stood
Armed, and looked grim as he were wood, . . . [mad
A wolf there stood before him at his feet
With eyen red, and of a man he eat.’

Now the train of combatants who come to joust in the tilting field:

‘There mayst thou see coming with Palamon
Licnrghe himself, the greate King of Thrace;
Black was his beard, and manly was his face
The circles of his eyen in his head
They gloweden betwixen yellow and red,
And like a griffon looked he about,
With combed haieres on his browes stout;
His limbes great, his brawnes hard and strong,
His shoulders broad, his armes round and long;
And as the guise was in his countree,
Full high upon a car of gold stood he,
With foure white bulles in the trace. . . .
A hundred lordes had he in his rout
Armed full well, with heartes stern and stout.
With Arcita, in stories as men find,
The great Emetrins the King of Ind,
Upon a steede bay, trapped in steel,
Covered with cloth of gold diapred wele,
Came riding like the god of Armes, Mars;
His coat armour was of a cloth of Tars, [a silk
Couched with pearles white, and round, and great; [trimmed
His saddle was of burnt gold new ybeat; [beaten
A mantelet upon his shoulders hanging
Bret-fnl of rubies red, as fire sparkling; [brimfull
His crise hair like ringes was yrun,
And that was yellow, and glittered as the sun; . . .
His voice was as a trumpe thnndering;
Upon his head he wear’d of laurel green,
A garland fresh and lusty for to seen; [pleasat
Upon his hand he bare for his dednit [amusement
An eagle tame, as any lily white:
A hundred lordes had he with him there,
All armed, save their heads, in all their gear. . . .

About this king there ran on every part
Full many a tame lion and leopart.'

Such is the gorgeous imagery, contrasted and varied, by which Chaucer belongs to the romantic age and school. He belongs to it as well by his amorous discussions, his broad jokes, his indelicate particulars. Alisoun, one of the pilgrims, a wife of Bath, has buried five husbands—saw the fifth at the burial of the fourth! —

'And Jankin oure clerk was on of tho:
As helpe me God, whan that I saw him go
Aftir the bere, me thought he had a paire
Of legges and of feet, so clene and faire
That all my herte I yave unto his hold.
He was, I trow, a twenty winter old,
And I was fourty, if I shal say soth . . .
As helpe me God, I was a lusty on,
And faire, and riche, and yonge, and well begon.'

She subdues her husband by the continuity of her temper:

'And whan that I had gotten unto me
By maistrie all the soverainetee,
And that he sayd, min owen trewe wif,
Do as the list, the terme of all thy lif,
Kepe thin honour, and kepe eke min estat;
After that day we never had debat.'

In acquiring the art of taming her husbands, she has learned the art of arguing, and can pile up reasons beyond a Lapland winter, to justify her practice:

'God bad us for to wex and multiplie;
That gentil text can I wel understand;
Eke wel I wot, he sayd, that min husbond
Shuld leve fader and moder, and take to me;
But of no noumbre mention made he,
Of bigamie or of octogamie;
Why shuld men than speke of it vilanie?
Lo here the wise king Dan Solomon,
I trow he hadde wives mo than on, . . .
Which a gift of God had he for alle his wives? . . .
Blessed be God that I have wedded five.
Welcome the sixthe whan that ever he shall.'

The religious mendicant is a jolly hypocrite, 'a wanton and a merry':

'Full well beloved and familier was he
With franklins over all, in his countree,
And eke with worthy women of the town. . . .
Full sweetely heard he confession,
And pleasant was his absolution.
He was an easy man to give pennance
There as he wist to have a good pittance; . . .
Therefore instead of weeping and prayers,
Men must give silver to the poore friars. . . .

His tippet was ay farced full of knives [stuffed
 And pins for to given faire wives:
 And certainly he had a merry note;
 Well could he sing and playen on a rote. . . .
 And over all, there as profit should arise,
 Courteous he was, and lowly of service:
 There n'as no man no where so virtuous;
[was not
 He was the beste beggar in all his house. . . .
 For though a widow hadde but a shoe,
 (So pleasant was his "*In Principio*")
 Yet would he have a farthing ere he went.'

Wallet in hand,—

'In every hous he gan to pore and prie,
 And begged mele and chese, or elles corn. . . .
 "Yeve us a bushel whete, or malt, or reye,
 A Goddes kichel, or a trippe of chese,
 Or elles what you list, we may not chese;
 A Goddes halfpeny, or a masse peny;
 Or yeve us of your braun, if ye have any,
 A dagon of your blanket, leve dame,
 Our suster dere, (lo here I write your name)." . . .
 And whan that he was out at dore anon,
 He planed away the names everich on.'

In the course of his tour, he finds one of his most liberal clients ill, in bed, who has given half his fortune, and still suffers; assures him that he has said 'many a precious orison' for his salvation, then inquires for the dame, who enters:

'This frere ariseth up ful curtisly,
 And hire embraceth in his armes narwe,
 And kisseth hire swete and chirketh as a sparwe.'

Then:

'Thanked be God that you yaf soule and lif,
 Yet saw I not this day so faire a wif
 In all the chirche, God so save me.'

Or again, the summoner, rallied by the friar, retorts in good humor:

'This Frere bosteth that he knoweth helle,
 And, God it wot, that is but litel wonder,
 Freres and fendes ben but litel asonder.
 For parde, ye han often time herd telle
 How that a Frere ravished was to helle
 In spirit ones by a visoun,
 And as an angel lad him up and down,
 To shewen him the peines that ther were . . .
 And er than hialf a furlong way of space,
 Right so as bees out swarmen of an hive,
 Out of the devils . . . ther gonnen to drive,
 A twenty thousand Freres on a route,
 And thurghout hell they swarmed al aboute,
 And com agen, as fast as they may gon.'

If such characters and sentiments show that Chaucer, like every writer, bears on his forehead the traces of his origin, there

are others which carry him beyond it, and give him affinity with the latest and highest. There is the Oxford clerk, silent or sententious, poor, learned, and thin by dint of hard study, riding on a horse lean as a rake:

‘He rather have at his bed’s head
Twenty bookes clothed in black or red
Of Aristotle and his philosophy,
Than robes rich or fiddle or psaltry:
But all be that he was a philosopher
Yet hadde he but little gold in coffer,
But all that he might of his friendes hent,
On bookes and on learning he it spent, . . .
Of study took he moste cure and heed;
Not a word spoke he more than was need . . .
Sounding in moral virtue was his speech,
And gladly would he learn and gladly teach.’

[catch

Or the young squire:

‘With lockes curl’d as they were laid in press;
Of twenty years of age he was I guess. . . .
Embroider’d was he, as it were a mead
All full of freshe floweres white and red:
Singing he was or floyting all the day;
He was as fresh as is the month of May:
Short was his gown, with sleeves long and wide;
Well could he sit on horse, and faire ride:
He coulde songes make, and well endite,
Joust and eke dance, and well pourtray and write:
So hot he loved, that by nightertale
He slept no more than doth the nightingale:
Courteous he was, lowly and serviceable,
And carv’d before his father at the table.’

[whistling

[night-time

And his father the knight, brave but gentle:

‘That from the time that he first began
To ride out, he loved chivalry,
Truth and honour, freedom and courtesy,
Full worthy was he in his lordes war, . . .
And ever honour’d for his worthiness. . . .
And though that he was worthy he was wise,
And of his porte as meek as is a maid.
He never yet no villainy ne said
In all his life unto no manner wight:
He was a very perfect gentle knight.’

When Arcite, flushed with the victory that awards him Emily, is mortally hurt by a plunge of his steed, he calls to his bed-side the maiden and his rival ‘that was his cousin dear,’ bequeaths to her the service of his disrobed spirit, and asks her to forget not Palamon if ‘ever ye shall be a wife,’—all his resentment gone, only his idolatry left, which surges over him in one supreme consciousness ere the silence and eternity of the grave:

'Alas the woe! alas the paines strong,
 That I for you have suffered, and so long!
 Alas the death! alas mine Emily!
 Alas departing of our company!
 Alas mine hearte's queen! alas my wife!
 Mine hearte's lady, ender of my life!
 What is this world?—what asken men to have?
 Now with his love, now in his colde grave—
 Alone,—withouten any company.
 Farewell my sweet,—farewell mine Emily!
 And softe take me in your armes tway
 For love of God, and hearkeneth what I say.'

Were ever the sighs and sobbings of a broken and ebbing spirit more pathetically related? Against the chattering wife of Bath, who stuns her listeners, is the demure prioress—'Madame Eglantine,' simple and pleasing, with nice and pretty ways, showing, as we have seen, signs of exquisite taste. As to her conscience,—

'She was so charitable and so piteous,
 She woulde weep if that she saw a mouse
 Caught in a trap, if it were dead or bled.
 Of smalle houndes had she that she fed
 With roasted flesh, and milk, and wastel bread,
 But sore wept she if one of them were dead,
 Or if men smote it with a yarde smart:
 And all was conscience and tender heart,'

As befits her, she tells the touching story of a Christian child, 'the ruby bright,' murdered in a Jewry, whose heart is so filled with divine grace that it breaks out continually in singing, 'to schoolward and homeward,' *O Alma Redemptoris!* Dying from the dreadful gash in his throat, he sings it still by the miracle of mercy; and dead,—

'In a tomb of marble stones clear
 Enclosen they his little body sweet:
 There he is now God lene us for to meet.' [where, grant

A like and stronger contrast is Griselda,¹ who softens the tyranny of her lord by patient submission and unconquerable affection. Her whole conduct is a fervid hymn in praise of forbearance. Smitten on the one cheek, she turns the other. Loving her husband, it is natural to her, in the true spirit of charity, to 'suffer all things, believe all things, hope all things, endure all things.' Altogether too passive, you will say. The objection is anticipated:

'This story is said, not for that wives should
 Follow Griselda as in humility,
 For it were importable though they would;

¹ *Clerk's Tale.*

But for that every wight in his degree
 Should be constant in adversity
 As was Griselda, therefore Petrarch writeth
 This story, which with high style he enditeth.
 For since a woman was so patient
 Unto a mortal man, well more we ought
 Receiven all in gree that God us sent. . . .
 Let us then live in virtuous sufferance.'

[*kindness*]

There is need of a striking antithesis, in an age of brutality, when the only choice for woman lay between the violence of vituperation and the persuasion of meekness. Never to be forgotten is the secular priest, brother to the plowman:

'There was a poore *Parson* of a town,
 But rich he was of holy thought and work;
 His parishens devoutly would he teach;
 Benign he was, and wonder diligent,
 And in adversity full patient. . . .
 Wide was his parish, and houses far asunder,
 But he ne left naught for no rain nor thunder,
 In sickness and in mischief, to visit
 The farthest in his parish much and lite
 Upon his feet, and in his hand a staff:
 This noble 'nsample to his sheep he yaf,
 That first he wrought, and afterward he taught,
 Out of the gospel he the wordes caught,
 And this figure he added yet thereto,
 That if gold ruste what should iron do? . . .
 He was a shepherd and no mercenary.'

[*little*][*gave*]

There is yet something good in Nazareth. Not all the ecclesiastics are venal and voluptuous. This one preaches a long and earnest sermon on the text:

'Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.'

The genius that in large measure is shaped by the books it has read and the times it has lived in, is itself a distinct element of growth. What could be more broad and catholic than these *Tales*, open alike to Briton and to man, shedding long beams of promise on the horizon?

Periods.—Chaucer was nourished on the French Romance poetry, which in his early life formed the chief reading of the court circles. After the date of his first visit to Italy, impressed with the ineffaceable charm of that land of loveliness and kindling life, his foreign models were less French than Italian. Here he imitated the lively Boccaccio rather than Dante, who was too severe, or Petrarch, who was too sentimental. From his favorite,

he freely translated his two longest, and, in a sense, two greatest poems,—*Troilus and Creseide* and the *Knight's Tale*. But while his riper genius is guided by the poets of Italy, he is still influenced by those of France,—the *troubadours* and *trouvères*. The comic stories in the *Canterbury Tales* are mostly based on the *fabliaux*. His indirect debt to the Italian stars, however, in all that concerns the elegant handling of material, and in the fusion of the romantic with the classic spirit, is more important. It is in the immortal group of pilgrims that he breaks away from the literary traditions and restricted tastes of ranks and classes, and becomes characteristically English, distinctly national. Even here extraneous influences may be detected, but original genius gives itself freely to the native force of its theme, and we have, for the most part, the pleasing conditions of daily life. The *predominant* influence, therefore, till 1372, is French; thence till 1384, Italian; from 1384 till 1400, English. This poetic development may be represented by the correspondent table of works:

First period.....	{ <div>Romaunt of the Rose, Complaint to Pity, Book of the Duchess, The Dream, The Court of Love, The Flower and the Leaf,</div>	} (attributed). ¹
Second period....	{ <div>The Former Age, The Assembly of Fowls, The House of Fame, Troilus and Creseide, Knight's Tale.</div>	
Third period.....	{ <div>Legend of Good Women, Canterbury Tales (<i>the majority</i>), Astrolabie (<i>prose</i>), Testament of Love (<i>attributed</i>), Various Ballads.</div>	

Style.—Refined, precise, perspicuous, employing figures less for ornament than lucidity; flexible and graceful, varying in subtle response to the subject and the mood; the living voice, as

¹ The genuineness of many works which till recently have passed as Chaucer's, has been questioned by the most advanced school of criticism. The dust of the controversy has not yet settled.

it were, of nature, carrying a tone as original and divine as the music of her purling brooks; sometimes tedious from too great minuteness, as in other writers from too frequent digression; if somewhat artificial and disjointed in the earlier workmanship, simple and well-ordered in the later. Do but consider, for instance, the 'linked sweetness' of the love-passages in *Troilus*, or the grand harmony of his tragic description, as of the temple of Mars,—

'First on the wal was peynted a forest,
In which ther dwelleth neither man ne best,
With knotty knarry bareyne trees olde
Of stubbes scharpe and hidous to byholde
In which ther ran a swymbel in a swough.'

Or the divine liquidness of diction and fluidity of movement in this stanza of the child-martyr:

'My throte is cut unto my nekke-bone,
Saide this child, and as by way of kinde
I shoulde have deyed, yea, longe time agone;
But Jesu Christ, as ye in bookes finde,
Will that His glory last and be in minde,
And for the worship of His mother dere
Yet may I sing *O Alma* loud and clere.'

Compare Wordsworth's modernization of the first three lines:

'My throat is cut unto the bone, I trow,
Said this young child, and by the law of kind
I should have died, yea, many hours ago.'

The flower must fade, though gathered by the most skilful hand, when severed from its root that lies imbedded in the soil.

Rank.—First modeller of the heroic couplet, first of the modern versifiers, whose melody and ease few, if any, have surpassed; whose variety and power of diction not ten of his successors have been able to rival; to Occleve, his pupil,—

'The firste fynder of our faire langage.'

The first artist of expression,—that is, the first to command or guide his impressions, to deliberate, sift, test, reject, and alter. Inventive, though a disciple; original, though a translator; and—like Shakespeare—a borrower, but lending to all that he borrows the gentle luxuriance of his own fancy, extracting from the old romances their sublime extravagances without their frivolous descriptions, re-creating the rude materials of the *trouvères* into

forms of elegance, retaining the gayety and critical coolness of the French without its wearisome idleness, and tempering the joyous carelessness of the Italian with the English seriousness.

Our first painter of Nature, who, haunting her solitudes, caught the glow of her skies and earth in his landscape. Without the gift to see the hidden wealth of meaning in the springing herbage, dew-drops, and rivulets glad, in the sighings among the reeds and the silent openings of the flowers, no great poet is possible. Chaucer has it conspicuously. His grass, soft as velvet, which he is never done praising, is 'so small, so thick, so fresh of hue!' The colors of petal and leaf, 'white, blue, yellow, and red,' he counts. The note of every song-bird he knows and loves. His scenery has the freshness of a perennial spring. Across five centuries its leaves are green, and its breezes fan our cheeks. The May-time is his favorite season. Before Burns or Wordsworth, he has loved and sung the daisy, the eye-of-day, and how tenderly!

'Then in my bed there daweth me no day
That I n'am up and walking in the mead,
To see this flower against the sunne spread,
When it upriseth early in the morrow;
That blissful sight softeneth all my sorrow.'

With the simple, pure delight of a child, he kneels to greet it when it first unfolds:

'And down on knees anon right I me set,
And as I could this freshe flow'r I grette,
Kneeling always till it unclosed was
Upon the small, and soft, and sweete gras.'

The first clear-eyed and catholic observer of man, who, catching the living manners as they rise, fixes them in pictures that show the life of a hundred years as vivid and familiar as the figures in the streets of our cities. Think of the portraits of the knight, the squire, the prioress, the wife, the clerk, the parson, the monk,—

'And, for to fasten his hood under his chin,
He had of gold ywrought a curious pin;
A love-knot in the greater end there was:
His head was bald, and shone as any glass,
And eke his face, as it had been anoint;
He was a lord full fat and in good point:
His eyen steep, and rolling in his head,
That steamed as a furnace of a lead.'

Of the friar,—

‘Somewhat he *lisp*ed for his wantonness
To make his English sweet upon his tongue;
 And in his harping, when that he had sung,
His eyen twinkled in his head, aright
As do the starres in a frosty night.’

The lawyer,—

‘No where so busy a man as he there n’as,
 And yet he seemed busier than he was.’ [was not]

The franklin,—

‘To liven in delight was ever his won,
 For he was Epicurus’ owen son, . . .
 It snowed in his house of meat and drink
 Of alle dainties that men could of think.
 After the sundry seasons of the year,
 So changed he his meat and his soupere. . . .
 His table dormant in his hall alway
 Stood ready cover’d all the longe day.’ [custom]

The doctor of physic,—

‘In all this world ne was there none him like
 To speak of physic and of surgery,
 For he was grounded in astronomy.
 He kept his patient a full great deal
 In houres by his magic naturel:
 Well could he fortunen the ascendant
 Of his images for his patient. . . .
 Of his diet measurable was he,
 For it was of no superfluity,
 But of great nourishing, and digestible.
 His study was but little on the Bible.
 For gold in physic is a cordial,
 Therefore he loved gold in special.’ [make fortunate]

The miller,—

‘He was short shouldered, broad, a thicke gnarre,
 Ther n’as no door that he n’olde heave off bar,
 Or break it at a running with his head;
 His beard as any sow or fox was red,
 And thereto broad as though it were a spade.
 Upon the cop right of his nose he had
 A wert, and thereon stood a tuft of hairs
 Red as the bristles of a sowes ears:
 His nose-thirles blacke were and wide:
 A sword and buckler bare he by his side:
 His mouth as wide was as a furnace:
 He was a jangler and a Goliardeis,
 And that was most of sin and harlotries:
 Well could he stealen corn and tollen thrice.’ [knot]
 [top]
 [nostrils]
 [reveller]

The reeve,—

‘His beard was shorn as nigh as ever he can:
 His hair was by his eares ronnd yshorn:
 His top was docked like a priest beforne:
 Full longe were his legges and full lean,
 Ylike a staff; there was no calf yseen.’

The summoner,—

‘With scalled browes black and pilled beard; [scurfy, bald]
Of his visage children were sore afeard. . . .
Well lov’d he garlick, onions, and leeks,
And for to drink strong wine as red as blood;
Then would he speak and cry as he were wood.’ [*mad*]

The pardoner,—

‘That straight was comen from the court of Rome;
Full loud he sang “Come hither love to me.” . . .
His wallet lay before him in his lap
Bret-full of pardon come from Rome all hot.’ [*brimfull*]

Face, costume, disposition, habits, antecedents,—all are here, each character distinct and to this day typical; each maintained, moreover, by its subsequent actions; each speech appropriate to the speaker, and all strung together by incidents so natural, by conversations so life-like,—a veritable troop of pilgrims filing leisurely on, talking and trying to amuse themselves by what they have heard in the hall or by the wayside! This is dramatic composition, not in its full and precise form, but in its rudiments. The pictorial power of dealing in a living way with men and their actions is Chaucer’s point of contact with Shakespeare:

Like all who excel in the delineation of character, a master of humor and pathos. To take an additional example; the pardoner, describing himself preaching, says:

‘Then pain I me to stretchen forth my neck,
And *east* and *west* upon the people I *beck*,
As doth a dove sitting upon a barn.’

Or, to view the full length of a monk in one line,—

‘Fat as a whale, and *walked as a swan*.’

As with Shakespeare, again, it is difficult to decide in which style Chaucer is greater,—the humorous or the pathetic. When Griselda is informed by her husband that she must return to her father to make room for her successor, she says:

‘I never held me lady ne maistress,
But humble servant to your worthiness,
And ever shall, while that my life may dure,
Aboven every worldly creature. . . .
And of your newe wife God of his grace
So grant you weal and prosperity;
For I wol gladly yelden her my place,
In which that I was blissful wont to be:
For, sith it liketh you my lord quod she,
That whilome weren all my heartes rest,
That I shall gon, I wol go where you list. . . .

*O goode God! how gentle and how kind
Ye seemed by your speech and your visage
The day that maked was our marriage!*

Find, who will, a finer burst of natural feeling than is expressed in the closing verses. When Troilus is bereft of Creseide by her departure for the Grecian camp, the universe is absorbed in the one idea of his love:

‘And every night, as was his wont to do,
He stood, the bright moon shining to behold,
And all his sorrow to the moon he told,
And said — “Surely when thou art horned new,
I shall be glad — *if all the world be true.*”’

Ah me, match it who can!

Yet Chaucer is not one of the great classics whose imaginations revel equally in regions of mirth, beauty, and grandeur. He wants their high seriousness, which detecting the divine significance of things, breathes the aspiration for something purer and lovelier, more thrilling and powerful, than real life affords, and with its prophetic vision helps faith to lay hold on the future life. He loves the fresh green of the panting spring, but has little sympathy with the sear and yellow of the mystical autumn. His love of nature is a simple, unreflective, childlike love:

‘He listeneth to the lark,
Whose song comes with the sunshine through the dark
Of painted glass, in leaden lattice bound,
He listeneth and *he laugheth at the sound,*
Then writeth in a book like any clerk.’

Nature is not to him, as it is to the highest, a symbol translucent with the light of the moral and spiritual world. He lacks the faculty of true naturalistic interpretation. He has never heard —

‘The voice mysterious, which whoso hears
Must think on what will be, and what has been.’

Character. — A man of letters and of action, trained in books, war, courts, business, travel. A poet and a logician, a student and an observer, a linguist and a politician, a courtier of opulent tastes and a philosopher who surveyed mankind in their widest sphere. He was a hard worker. By his own confession, reading was his chief delight. The eagle that carries him into the empyrean, says:

‘Thou goest home to thine house anone,
And also dumb as a stone
Thou sittest at another book
Till fully dazed is thy look.’

Happy among books, he was happy among men. Scorning only hypocrisy, he loved many-colored life,—its weakness and its strength, its delicacy and its force, its laughter and its tears. Modest, glad, and tender. Never were lovers more genuine, untainted and adoring, than his. Troilus and Creseide speak with hearts of primeval innocence. He had indeed said, perhaps in a momentary scepticism or irritation, of the courtly class whose stability seemed to lie in perpetual change:

‘What man ymay the wind restrain,
Or holden a snake by the tail?
Who may a slipper eel restrain
That it will void withouten fail?
Or who can driven so a nail
To make sure newfangleness,
Save women, that can gie their sail
To row their boat with doubleness?’

[inconstancy
[guide]

Yet for woman he had a true and chivalrous regard. It was with the avowed purpose of rendering homage to the beauty of pure womanhood that he wrote the legend—

‘Of goode women, maideness, and wives,
That weren true in loving all their lives.’

His emblem of womanly truth and purity was the daisy, with its head of gold and crown of white. And how he loves it!

‘So glad am I, when that I have presence
Of it, to doon it alle reverence
As she that is of alle floures flour,
Fulfilled of all virtue and honour,
And ever alike fair and fresh of hue,
And I love it, and ever alike new,
And ever shall, till that mine herte die.’

I know of nothing like it,—this man of the world, of ceremonies and cavalcades, conversant with high and low, with gallant knights and bedizened ladies, far-travelled, tempest-tossed, and time-worn, turning from the gorgeous imagery that filled his vision to find ‘revel and solace’ in the open-air world, and dwelling with the glad, sweet abandon of a child, on the springing flowers, the green fields, the budding woods, the singing of the little birds:

‘So loud they sang, that all the woodes rung
Like as it should shiver in pieces small;
And as methought that the Nightingale
With so great might her voice out-wrest,
Right as her heart for love would burst.’

Or the beauty of the morning. Were never sun-risings so exhilarating as his:

‘The busy larke, messenger of day
 Saluteth in her song the morwe gray;
 And fyry Phebus riseth up so bright
 That al the orient laugheth of the light,
 And with his stremes dryeth in the greves
 The silver dropes hongyng on the leeves.’

Sensitive to every change of feeling in himself and others, his sympathies were as large as the nature of man. Bred among aristocrats, he thought that good desires and ‘gentil dedes’ were the only aristocracy.

Brave in misfortune. Troubled he was, but no trouble could extort from him a fretful note. He easily shirks the burden, and sings to his empty purse:

‘To you my purse, and to none other wight,
 Complain I, for ye be my lady dear;
 I am sorry now that ye be so light,
 For certes ye now make me heavy cheer:
 Me were as lief be laid upon a bier,
 For which unto your mercy thus I cry,
 Be heavy again, or elles must I die.

Now vouchsafen this day ere it be night
 That I of you the blissful sound may hear,
 Or see your colour like the sunne bright,
 That of yellowness ne had never peer;
 Ye be my life, ye be my heartes steer;
 Queen of comfort and of good company,
 Be heavy again, or elles must I die.

[*helm*]

Now purse, that art to me my lives light,
 And saviour, as down in this world here,
 Out of this towne help me by your might,
 Sithen that you will not be my tresor,
 For I am shave as nigh as any frere,
 But I prayen unto your courtesy
 Be heavy again, or elles must I die.’

The flying shadow of grief touches him, but does not rest there.

Less sportive, he would have been less vulgar. Some of his pages are stained, but the blemishes are not of evil intent, and are rather to be imputed to the age. Our minds are tinged with the color of custom. Refinement preserves public decency, want of it permits the grossest violations. Having fixed upon his personage, Chaucer, as he himself pleads, had to adjust the tale to the teller. However,—

‘Who list not to hear,
 Turn over the leaf, and choose another tale!’

His sympathies are with virtue. For subjects obscene and disgusting, as such, he has no taste. It is not the *filth* he enjoys, but

the *fun*. Of two unnatural selections by the ‘moral Gower,’ he cries:

‘Of all such cursed stones I say, Fy!’

He is a moralist, but a happy and humorous one; of an ethical temper, too indolent to make a reformer in the sense in which the fiery Langland or the stern Wycliffe was one. He was progressive without being revolutionary.

Influence.—He rescued the native tongue from Babylonish confusion, and established a literary diction, banishing from Anglo-Saxon the superannuated and uncouth, and softening its churlish nature by the intermixture of words of Romance fancy.

He created, or introduced a new versification; exemplified the principle of syllabical regularity, which is now the law and the practice of our poetry; and by the superior correctness, grace, elevation, and harmony of his style, became the first model to succeeding writers.

He delineated English society with a pictorial force that makes us familiar with the domestic habits and modes of thinking of a most interesting and important period.

He is an unfailing fount of joy and strength, to revive the relish of simple pleasures, to bring back the freshness that warmed the springtime of our being, to refine youthful love, to make us esteem better the gentle and noble, and to feel more kindly towards the rude and base. Our market-places will be grass-grown, the hum of our industry will be stilled, but the ages will carry, as on the odoriferous wings of gentle gales, the sweet strains of —

‘That noble Chaucer, in those former times,
Who first enriched our English with his rhymes,
And was the first of ours that ever broke
Into the Muse’s treasures, and first spoke
In mighty numbers; delving in the mine
Of perfect knowledge.’

RETROGRESSIVE PERIOD.

CHAPTER V.

FEATURES.

A brilliant sun enlivens the face of nature with an unusual lustre; the sudden appearance of cloudless skies, and the unexpected warmth of a tepid atmosphere, after the gloom and inclemencies of a tedious winter, fill our hearts with the visionary prospects of a speedy summer; and we fondly anticipate a long continuance of gentle gales and vernal serenity. But winter returns with redoubled horrors; the clouds condense more formidably than before; and those tender buds, and early blossoms, which were called forth by the transient gleam of a temporary sunshine, are nipped by frost and torn by tempests.—*Warton*.

Politics.—After two and a half centuries of majestic rule, the dominion of the Plantagenets¹ proper passed away forever; and the House of Lancaster, in the person of Henry IV, was raised to the throne by a Parliamentary revolution. He bought the support of the Church by the promise of religious persecution, and that of the nobles by a renewal of the fatal French war. Henry V continued and almost realized the dream of an English empire in France, and his widow, contracting a second marriage with Owen Tudor, descendant of the Welsh princes, became the ancestress of another proud line of English sovereigns. The career of Henry VI was one of disaster in almost every variety,—factional strife at home, and calamity abroad. The Hundred Years' War ended, happily for mankind, with the expulsion of the English from French soil. Revolts of the populace were followed by a long and deadly struggle for supremacy between the parties of the red rose and the white, headed by two branches of the Plantagenet dynasty,—the Lancastrians and the Yorkists. After the violent crimes and excesses of Edward IV and Richard III, of the House of York—the one a despot and a sensualist, the other a usurper and a monster—when the illus-

¹The heads of the line were Geoffrey of Anjou and Maud, daughter of Henry I of England. The name is derived from *Planta Genista*, Latin for the shrub which was worn as an emblem of humility by the first Earl of Anjou when a pilgrim of Holy Land. From this his successors took their crest and their surname.

trious barons were exterminated, or reduced to a shadow of their former greatness, the rival claims of the warring lines were united in the House of Tudor.

While the administration swerved continually into an irregular course, the restraint of Parliament grew more effectual, and notions of legal right acquired more precision, till the time of Henry VI, when the progress of constitutional liberty was arrested by the Wars of the Roses. To the restriction of suffrage succeeded the corruption of elections.¹ The baronage wrecked, the Crown towered into solitary greatness, and by its overpowering influence practically usurped the legislative functions of the two Houses. The interests of self-preservation led the churchman, the squire, and the burgess to lay freedom at the foot of the throne. Without a standing army, however, it is impossible to oppress, beyond a certain point, an armed people. Governors could safely be tyrants within the precinct of the court, but any general and long-continued despotism was prevented by the awe in which they stood of the temper and strength of the governed. From the accession of Henry VII is to be dated a new era, which, if less distinguished by the spirit of freedom, is more prosperous in the diffusion of opulence and the preservation of order.

Society.—Brutal as was the strife of the Roses, its effects were limited, in fact, to the great lords and their feudal retainers. The trading and industrial classes appear, for the most part, to have stood wholly aloof. It was of this period that Comines, an accomplished observer of his age, wrote:

‘In my opinion, of all the countries in Europe where I was ever acquainted, the government is nowhere so well managed, the people nowhere less obnoxious to violence and oppression, nor their houses less liable to the desolations of war, than in England, for there the calamities fall only upon their authors.’

Elsewhere:

‘England has this peculiar grace, that neither the country, nor the people, nor the houses are wasted, destroyed, or demolished; but the calamities and misfortunes of the war fall only upon the soldiers, and especially the nobility.’²

Orders were frequently issued, previous to a battle, to slay the

¹ The complaint of the men of Kent in Cade’s revolt, 1450, alleges: ‘The people of the shire are not allowed to have their free election in the choosing of knights for the shire, but letters have been sent from divers estates to the great rulers of all the country, the which enforceth their tenants and other people by force to choose other persons than the common will is.’

² The actual warfare in England from 1455 to 1485 included an aggregate space of about two years.

nobles and spare the commoners. The civil war was the death-struggle of feudalism. The consequent depression of the aristocracy was the elevation of the people. The words *rent* and *wages*, in familiar use, indicate the relations of class to class. The rude fidelity of vassalage was exchanged for the hard bargaining of tenancy.

There were no factories. Every manufacture — cloth-making the most important — was carried on, in its several branches, at the homes of the workmen. The natural resources of the country were very imperfectly operated. A Venetian traveller, speaking of the general aspect of the country in the time of Henry VII, says:

‘England is all diversified by pleasant undulating hills and beautiful valleys, nothing being to be seen but agreeable woods, or extensive meadows, or lands in cultivation.’

But he adds:

‘Agriculture is not practised in this island beyond what is required for the consumption of the people; because, were they to plough and sow all the land that was capable of cultivation, they might sell a quantity of grain to the surrounding countries.’

Capital seems to have been more advantageously applied to the growth of sheep. By a statute of 1495, every laborer from mid March to mid September is to be at his work before five o’clock in the morning, nor leave it till between seven and eight in the evening, with a half hour for breakfast and an hour for dinner. Modern labor would not appear, in comparison, to be overtaken.

It was still a military community, with an excess of vigor and readiness to fight. The iron helmet hung upon the wall of the castle; and the long bows were at hand for the deadly flight of the arrow, or the practice of archery on Sundays and festival days. Parliaments, early in the century, were like armed camps. That of 1426 was called the ‘Club Parliament,’ from the circumstance that, when arms were prohibited, the retainers of the barons appeared with clubs on their shoulders. When clubs were forbidden, stones and balls of lead were concealed in the clothing. Later there is the story of a street-scuffle between two noblemen, in which several retainers were killed. A statute of restraint was enacted against Oxford scholars who hunted with dogs in parks and forests, threatened the lives of keepers, and liberated clerks convicted of felony. The harvest of highway robbery was abundant. ‘If God,’ said a French general, ‘had

been a captain now-a-days, he would have turned marauder.' Says Fortescue, Chancellor under Henry VI:

'It is cowardise and lack of hartes and corage that kepeth the Frenchmen from rysyng, and not povertie; which corage no Frenche man hath like to the English man. It hath been often seen in England that iij or iv thefes, for povertie, hath sett upon vij or viij true men, and robbyd them al. But it hath not ben seen in Fraunce, that vij or viij thefes have ben hardy to robbe iij or iv true men. Wherefor it is right seld that Frenchmen be hangyd for robberye, for that they have no hertys to do so terryble an acte. There be therfor mo men hangid in Englund, in a yere, for robberye and manslaughter, than ther be hangid in Fraunce for such cause of crime in vij yers.'

It was natural that the discharged retainer of a decayed house should rather incline to take a purse than wield a spade. Ballad story relates how King Edward IV on a hunt meets a bold tanner, and inquires the 'readiest waye to Drayton Basset,—

'To Drayton Basset woldst thou goe,
Fro the place where thou dost stand?
The next payre of gallowes thou comest unto,
Turne in upon thy right hand.'

Violence and cruelty went hand in hand. In the reign of Henry IV, it was made felony to cut out any person's tongue, or put out his eyes,—crimes which, the act says, were very frequent. The Earl of Rutland carrying on a pole the severed head of his brother-in-law, presented it to this monarch in testimony of his loyalty. Two princes were smothered in the tower. Men were beheaded without appeal to law or justice. The gory head of a Lollard was welcomed into London, with psalms of thanksgiving, by a procession of abbots and bishops, who went out to meet it. The head of a Royalist, crowned in mockery with a diadem of paper, was impaled on the walls of York.

Now that the battle-axe and sword had destroyed the petty royalty of the feudal baron, the lords quitted their sombre castles—strong fortresses, but dreary abodes—and flocked into others uniting convenience and beauty with some power of defence. Vaulted roofs and turrets, the decorated gable and the spacious window, superseded in most instances the protecting parapet and the frowning embrasure. The distinguishing feature of the domestic arrangement was still the great hall with its central fire. In towns the upper stories projected over the lower, so that in narrow streets the opposite fronts were only a few feet apart. A Paston letter gives a curious insight into the construction of the ordinary manor-house:

‘Patrick and his fellowship are sore afraid that ye would enter again upon them; and they have made great ordinance within the house; and it is told me they have made bars to bar the doors crosswise; and they have made wickets in every quarter of the house to shoot out at, both with bows and with hand-guns; and the holes that be made for hand-guns they be scarce knee-high from the plancher (floor); and of such holes be made five; there can no man shoot out at them with no hand-bows.’

Sleeping apartments were small. Mrs. Paston is puzzled to know how she can put her husband’s writing-board and his coffer beside the bed, so that he may have space to sit. Beds were rarely used except by the most wealthy. It is poetry and history combined that presents the affecting spectacle of a care-worn and sleepless king asking,—

‘Why, rather, Sleep, liest thou in *smoky cribs*,
Upon uneasy pallets stretching thee,
And hush’d with buzzing night-flies to thy slumber;
Than in the *perfumed chambers* of the great,
Under the canopies of costly state,
And lull’d with sounds of sweetest melody?’¹

Common utensils were transmitted in wills from generation to generation,—tongs, bellows, pans, pewter dishes, ‘a great earthen pot that was my mother’s.’

From the scarcity of books, reading could be no common acquirement. From the dearness of parchment and the slowness of scribes, manuscripts were things purchasable only by princely munificence. News travelled slowly, borne for the most part, by traders and pilgrims. The result of the great battle of Towton was six days in reaching London. Posts—horsemen placed twenty miles apart—were now first used on the road from London to Scotland. No modern net-work of wires and rails broke the narrow circle of local influence in which men usually abode from childhood to age.

Amid monotonous cares and the endless inconvenience of climate, while kings are dethroned and princes assassinated, the spirit of enjoyment abides, reflected in the perilous combats of the lists, the masks and disguisings of the palace, the antique pageantry of Christmas, the merriments of Easter and May-day. Wrestlers contended before the mayor and aldermen, as their fathers had done; and the archers went out, as of old, into Finsbury Fields. Vaulters came tumbling about, jugglers bewitched the eye, and the ambulatory minstrel with his harp borne before him by his smiling page, who—

¹ Shakespeare’s *Henry IV.*

‘Walken fer and wyde,
Her and ther, in every syde,
In many a diverse londe.’

From the days of Henry III, the burning crests of the marching watch¹ had sent up their triumphant fires. The twilight hours of June and July witnessed the simple hospitalities of primitive London:

‘On the vigils of festival days, and on the same festival days after the sun setting, there were usually made bonfires in the streets, every man bestowing wood and labor toward them; the wealthier sort also, before their doors near to the said bonfire, would set out tables on the vigils, furnished with sweet bread and good drink, and on the festival days with meats and drinks plentifully, whereunto they would invite their neighbors and passengers also to sit and be merry with them in great familiarity, praising God for the benefits bestowed on them.’

Most beautiful of all—in its original simplicity so associated with the love of nature—was the custom of rising at dawn in the month of May,² and going forth, rich and poor, with one impulse, to the woods for boughs of hawthorn and laurel to deck the doorways of the street, as a joyful welcoming, amid feasting and dancing, of the sweet spring-time. Spontaneous and unconscious acknowledgment of the beauty of the Universe, as by men reared in the pathless forests, knowing Nature as a household friend that has entwined itself with their first affections; a thing of the nerves and animal spirits, yet impossible, alas! to our present analytic and jaded civilization. We, all utilitarian and prosaic, mourn in vain the loss of that direct and unreflecting pleasure which the untutored imagination felt in habitual converse with earth and sky, talking to the wayside flowers of its love, and to the fading clouds of its ambition; or that earlier freshness of eye, which, in the first pencillings of dawn that struck some lonely peak or fell into some sequestered dell, saw the Fairies retiring from their moonlight dances into the green knolls where they made their homes.

Religion.—It may be doubtful whether the belief in fairies had passed away. At least they lurked in the by-corners of our poets, and existed elsewhere under a new character, degraded by the church into imps of darkness, to inspire no doubt a horror of relapse into heathenish rites. Superstition was wide and dense, and riveted with theology. Christianity in its struggle with the barbarian world had been profoundly modified. The tendency to

¹ The men of the watch were the voluntary police of the city.

² May began twelve days later than now, and ended in the midst of June.

a material, sensuous faith was fatally strengthened, first by the infusion of the pagan element, then by the debasement and avarice of the clergy. To the idols of Paganism succeeded shrines, relics, masses, holy wells, awful exorcisms, saintly vigils, festivals, images of miraculous power, pilgrimages afar and penances at home. At Canterbury were skulls, chins, teeth, hands, fingers, arms, feet, shoes, legs, hair, rags, splinters from the crown of thorns, *et cætera*, to be adored and kissed by the innumerable pilgrims—for money. Each shrine had certificates written by the Virgin or by angels, to support the lucrative impostures. Winking statues were rife; bleeding wafers were exhibited; boys wrapped in gold foil were introduced as heavenly visions. Says a contemporary:

‘The ignorant masses worship the images of stone, or of wood, or marble, or brass, or painted on the walls of churches,—not as statues or mere figures, but as if they were living, and trust more in them than in either Christ or the saints. Hence they offer them gold, silver, rings, and jewels of all kinds, and that the more may be wheedled into doing so, those who drive this trade hang medals from the neck or arms of the image, to sell, and gather the gifts they receive into heaps in conspicuous places, putting labels on them by which the names of the donors may be proclaimed. By all this a great part of the world is put past itself about these images, and led to make often distant pilgrimages, that they may visit some little figure and leave their gifts to it; and all piety, charity and duty is neglected to do this, in the belief that they have given and repented enough if they have put gold into the bag at the shrine.’

Charms and amulets were a sure guarantee against every form of disaster. The mystical virtues of the cross were the incessant theme of the monk. No happy issue of an adventure could be expected without its frequent sign. In peril or in pleasure, in sorrow and in sin, they diagrammed it by the motion of their hands. It stood as the hallowed witness which marked the boundaries between parishes. It stood at the beginning and at the end of private letters, as of public documents. It became the mark which served as the convenient signature of some unlettered baron. They knelt to it, kissed it—kissed it as a palpable and visible deity. Waxen images were potent to procure health and weal. An anxious wife writes to her husband, sick in London:

‘My mother vowed another image of wax of the weight of you, to our Lady of Walsingham; and she sent four nobles to the four orders of friars at Norwich to pray for you; and I have vowed to go on pilgrimage to Walsingham and St. Leonards.’

In the last human trial, these vain ceremonials were efficacious to comfort and to cheer. Testaments provided for requiems to be

said, in rich vestments especially furnished for the purpose; newly-painted images of 'our Lady' to be set up, with tapers ever burning; the chimes in the steeple to be repaired; the priest to have a yearly reward, or a residence, and at each meal to repeat the name of the testator, that they who hear may say, 'God have mercy on his soul'; a Latin sentence to be written 'on the fore part of the iron about my grave,' and therewith 'the pardon which I purchased'; ten pounds 'to a priest for to go to Rome, and I will that the said priest go to the stations and say masses as is according to a pilgrim.' Henry VII engaged two thousand masses, at sixpence (!) each, to be said for the repose of his soul.

It was universally taught that innumerable evil spirits were ranging over the world, seeking the present misery and future ruin of mankind,—fallen spirits that retained the angelic capacities, and directed against men the energies of superhuman malice. The brave yeomen, who fronted danger in the field, quailed before the gentle Maid as a sorceress. A proclamation was issued to the soldiery to reassure them against the *incantations* of the girl. The Duke of Bedford wrote to the king:

'All things here prospered for you till the time of the siege of Orleans, undertaken of whose advice God only knows. Since the death of my cousin of Salisbury, whom God absolve, who fell by the hand of God, as it seemeth, your people, who were assembled in great number at this siege, have received a terrible check. This has been caused in part, as we trow, by the confidence our enemies have in a disciple and limb of the Devil, called Pucelle, that used false enchantments and sorcery. The which stroke and discomfiture has not only lessened the number of your people here, but also sunk the courage of the remainder in a wonderful manner, and encouraged your enemies to assemble themselves forthwith in great numbers.'

The shrivelled arm of Richard III was attributed to witchcraft. A duchess, convicted of practicing magic against the king's life, was compelled to do penance in the streets, while two of her servants were executed. Satan with his feudatories and vassals—cast out from Olympus and Asgard, outlawed by the new dynasty—lurked in forest and mountain, and issuing forth only after night-fall, raised the desolating tempest, sent the pestilential blast, and kept body and soul together by an illicit traffic between this world and the other. The fancy that once lay warm about the heart, now sends a chill among the roots of the hair.

So flourished, outwardly, the empire of Rome, while ideas became the occasions of superstition, and forms of ritualism dis-

placed a living consciousness. Religious discourses, without judgment or spirit, were a motley mixture of gross fiction and extravagant invention. Practical religion was a very simple affair. The one thing needful for a sinner, however scandalous his moral life, was to confess regularly, to receive the sacrament, to be absolved. If sick, or ill at ease, he might be recommended to some wonder-working image, which would bow when it was pleased, and avert its head if the present was unsatisfactory. For every mass—usually bought by the dozen—so many years were struck off from the penal period. The rulers of the Church, who once tamed the fiery Northern warriors by the magic of their sanctity, were sunk into luxurious indolence and vice. The popes, who once lived to remind men of the eternal laws which they ought to obey, were, almost without exception, worldly, intriguing, and immoral. Several were murderers, most were plunderers, one was poisoned by his successor, another was elected by menaces and bribes, the last died by the poison he had mingled for others who stood in the way of his greed and ambition. Prelates, cardinals, and abbots were occupied chiefly in maintaining their splendor. The friars and the secular clergy who were to live for others, not for themselves, turned their spiritual powers to account to obtain from the laity the means for their self-indulgence. The monks, who once lived in an enchanted atmosphere of piety and beneficence, were so many herds of lazy, illiterate, and licentious Epicureans, dividing their hours between the chapel, the tavern, and the brothel,—all scheming or dreaming on the eve of the judgment day! The priesthood, amenable only to spiritual judges, extend the privileges of their order till *clerk* was construed to mean any one who could write his name or read a sentence. A robber or an assassin had only to show that he could do either, and he was allowed what was called the ‘benefit of clergy.’

Now consider that such men owned a third or a half of the land in every country of Europe, while they confined their views in life to opulence, idleness, and feasting. At the installation of the Archbishop of York, brother of the King-Maker, there were present 3,500 persons, who consumed, 104 oxen and 6 wild bulls, 1,000 sheep, 304 calves, as many hogs, 2,000 swine, 500 stags, bucks, and does, 204 kids, 22,802 wild or tame fowls, 300 quar-

ters of corn, 300 tuns of ale, 100 of wine, a pipe of hippocras, 12 porpoises and seals. The Commons declared that with the revenues of the English Church the king would be able to maintain 15 earls, 1,500 knights, 6,200 squires, and 100 hospitals; each earl receiving annually 300 marks, each knight 100 marks, and the produce of four ploughed lands; each squire 40 marks, and the produce of two ploughed lands.

Was not a reformation of some sort an overwhelming necessity? So felt the people, who, if unable to comprehend an argument, were anxious for a correction of abuses. So felt the higher natures who led them, believing in justice, in righteousness, above all in truth, and caring not to live unless they lived nobly. So felt the Church—which repressed them, by entreaty, by remonstrance, by bribery, by force. The king and the peers allied themselves with the ecclesiastics. In 1400 the Statute of Heretics was passed; and William Sautre, a priest, became the first English martyr. A tailor, who denied transubstantiation—accused of having said that, if it were true, there were twenty thousand gods in every cornfield in England—was next committed to the flames. A nobleman, hung on the gallows with a fire blazing at his feet, suffered the double penalty for heresy and treason. Lollardism was crushed by the weight of the establishment above, but its principles, infecting all classes, from the lowest to the highest, were working a silent revolution. The soft spring green withered away, but its roots were quick in the soil. The clergy did not dream that the storm would gather again. For a moment they were startled by a statute of Henry VII ‘for the more sure and likely reformation of priests, clerks, and religious men’; but again the cloud disappeared, and again they forgot the warning. At this moment the Church, ever richer and more glittering, dazzled the eyes to the decay of its substance, like some majestic iceberg drifting southward out of the frozen North, seemingly stable as the eternal rocks, while down in the far deeps the base is dissolving and the centre of gravity is changing.

Learning.—Intellectual life disappeared with religious liberty. Learning declined, especially at Oxford. Her scholars became travelling mendicants, whose academical credentials were at times turned into ridicule and mockery by the insolence of

rank and wealth. The monasteries were no longer seats of culture. Twenty years after Chaucer's death, an Italian traveller said:

'I found in them men given up to sensuality in abundance, but very few lovers of learning, and those of a barbarous sort, skilled more in quibbles and sophisms than in literature.'

Knowledge was a stagnant morass or an impenetrable jungle. Literary production was nearly at an end. Puerile chroniclers, scribblers of prosaic commonplaces, translators from the worn-out field of French romance, give some distention to a period that would else collapse. An occasional gleam of genius faintly illuminates a date, like the last flicker of the dying day, or the pulse of the early dawn,—

'As if the morn had waked, and then
Shut close her lids of light again.'

In the nobler elements of national life, a dreary one-hundred years, whose chief consolation is, that the downward touches the upward movement; that everywhere in the common soil—the unconsidered people, sustained by the surviving Saxon character—lay the forces of which fruit should come. The popular cast of authorship shows the stir of a new interest among the masses. With a paucity of writers, in no former age were so many books transcribed. It is proof of an increased demand, that the process of copying was transferred from the monastic to the secular class. And it was this transfer that led to the introduction of printing. At first a secret and occult art. The monopolizers dreaded discovery, and the workmen were bound to secrecy by the solemnity of an oath. After their operations, the four sides of their forms were cautiously unscrewed, and the scattered type thrown beneath, for 'when the component parts of the press are in pieces, no one will understand what they mean.' In a mystical style, they impressed upon the wondering reader that the volume he held was of supernatural origin, announcing merely that it was 'neither drawn, nor written with a pen and ink, as all books before had been.' But the freemasonry was lost, the printers were dispersed; and at Cologne a plain English trader—Caxton—was initiated into the 'noble mystery and craft.' Very proud of the marvellous freight with which he returns after an absence of five-and-thirty years; very eager in

his zeal when he remembers the tedious, weary method of the Scriptorium, hardly equal to the production of a hundred Bibles in seven thousand days; almost professing, in his first printed work, to have performed a miracle:

‘I have practiced and learned, at my great charge, to put in order this said book in print after the manner and form as ye may here see; and is not written with pen and ink as other books be, to the end that *every man may have them* AT ONCE: for all the books of this story, thus imprinted as ye see, were *begun in one day, and also finished in one day.*’

Not unwilling to keep up the wonder and mystery of the new implement which men did not yet comprehend.¹

In 1453, the Crescent advanced upon the city of Constantine, the Greek Empire fell, Greek scholars were driven westward, Greek literature and art were forced into Italy; and Plato lived again, to join the ranks of the reformers. His mild and divine wisdom was at war with the sensuality that had become the scandal of the Church of Rome. ‘Beware of the Greek,’ ran the clerical proverb, ‘lest you be made a heretic.’ Italy that already, in the preceding age, had appropriated whatever Latin letters contained of strength or splendor to arouse the thought and fancy, became the school of Christendom. Thither repaired the men of taste or genius who desired to share the newly-discovered privileges of antiquity; and, quickened by the magnetic touch, returned with a generous ambition to vie with the noble ancients. Thence the stream of civilization was to flow as from its fount. With a fluctuating movement, the life current extended throughout Western Europe, England being among the latest to feel it. When gleams of the revival had long struggled with the scholastic cloud, the Greek language began to be taught at Oxford, and about 1490 they began to read the classics. Thence was to come every science and every elegance.

Language.—The emancipation of the national tongue was now confirmed by another monarch. Henry V, in a missive to the craft of brewers, declared:

‘The English tongne hath in modern days begun to be honorably enlarged and adorned; and for the better understanding of the people, the common idiom should be exercised in writing.’

¹ Who first taught to carve the letters on wooden blocks—who imagined to cast the metal with fusil types distinct one from the other,—*that* is, for Europe, a German romance with the opening pages forever wanting. Faust, Schöffer, Gutenberg, Costar, have their jealous votaries. The origin of some of the most interesting inventions is lost in obscure traditions. Perhaps the Chinese, who had practiced the art of block-printing for nearly two thousand years, suffered it to steal away over their ‘great wall.’ But the same extraordinary invention may occur at distinct periods. Friar Bacon indicated the ingredients of gunpowder a hundred years before the monk Schwartz, about 1330, actually struck out the fiery explosion.

We further learn that now ‘the Lords and the Commons began to have their proceedings noted down in the mother-tongue.’ Both this prince and his father left their wills in the native speech.

Religious diction, always in a more advanced stage of culture than was the secular, made, in the hands of Pecock, considerable progress in vocabulary, and more especially in logical structure. In Fortescue and the *Nut-brown Maid*, there is not only a diminution of obsolete English, but a modern cast of phrase and arrangement which denotes the commencement of a new era. There was little occasion for decided improvement until new conditions of society should create a necessity for it.

Poetry.—In the mutability of taste, the ancient romances were turned from verse into prose. They had pleased as pictures of manners still existing, but the correspondence was fading, while there was yet no antiquarian interest to preserve their hold on the public mind that had outgrown them. Indeed, after this literature—prose or metrical—had entranced for three centuries the few who read and the many who listened, its enchantment was on the wane: another taste—where taste existed—was now on the ascendant.

Nevertheless, it was the impoverished romance, imitated the hundredth time, compiled, abridged, even modernized, that chiefly occupied the dull rhymesters of the fifteenth century. After the heavy platitudes of Gower came the didactic puerilities of **Occleve**, a lawyer, who says truly that Chaucer, whom he strove to copy, would willingly have taught him, ‘*but I was dull, and learned little or nothing.*’ When a man’s only merit is a fond idolatry of his master, let him be forgotten. Then **Lydgate**, a monk, a long-winded and third-rate poet, who manufactures verses to order, for the king and his subjects; paraphrases or translates, as others have done with more grace and power, *The Fall of Princes*, *The Destruction of Troy*, and *The Siege of Thebes*. Here and there is a sublime truth, strongly expressed, as in the remarkable lines:

‘God hath a thousande handes to chastyse,
A thousande dartes of punicion,
A thousande bowes made in dyuers wyse,
A thousande arrowblastes bent in his dongeon.’

[*castle*

Or a descriptive gem, with much of the brilliancy of the Italian:

‘Tyli at the last amonge the bowes glade
Of aduenture I caught a plesaunt shade;
Ful smothe and playn and lusty for to sene
And soft as veluet was the yonge grene:
Where fro my hors I did alight as fast,
And on a bowe aloft his reyne cast.
So faynte and mate of werynesse I was, [fatigued
That I me layde adowne upon the gras,
Upon a bryncke, shortly for to tell,
Besyde the ryner of a cristall well;
And the water, as I reherse can,
Like quicke siluer in his streams ran
Of which the grauell and the bryght stone
As any golde agayne the sonne shone.’

Or a golden couplet, suggestive of the coloring and melody of later times:

‘Serpentes and adders, scaled syluer-bright,
Were ouer Rome sene flyeng all the nyght.’

There is an accent of originality in *The Dance of Death*, whose mocking and grotesque figures dance on their tomb to the sound of a fiddle played by a grinning skeleton; or a free vein of humor in *The Lack-penny*, which opens the street scenery of London:

‘To London once my stepps I bent,
Where trouth in no wyse should be faynt,
To Westmynster-ward I forthwith went,
To a man of law to make complaynt;
I sayd, “for Mary’s love, that holy saint!
Pity the poore that wold procede”;
But for lack of mony I cold not spede.

Then unto London I dyd me hye,
Of all the land it beareth the pryse.
“Hot pescodes,” one began to crye,
“Strabery rype, and cherries in the ryse”;
One bad me come nere and by some spyce,
Peper and safforne gan me bede,
But for lack of mony I myght not spede.

[began to offer me

Then to the Chepe I began me drawne,
Where mutch people I saw for to stand;
One ofred me velvet, sylke, and lawne,
An other he taketh me by the hande,
“Here is Parys thread, the fynest in the land”;
I never was used to such thyngs indede,
And wanting mony, I might not spede.

Then went I forth by London stone,
Throughout all Canwyke streete;
Drapers mutch cloth me ofred anone;
Then comes me one, cryed “Hot shepes feete”
One cryde “makerell,” “ryshes,” “grene,” an other
gan greete;

[rushes
[cry

On bad me by a hood to cover my head,
But for want of mony I myght not be sped.

Then I hyed me into Est-Chepe;
One cryes rybbs of befe, and many a pye:
Pewter pottes they clattered on a heape;
There was harpe, pype, and mynstralsye.
"Yea, by cock! nay, by cock!" some began crye;
Some songe of Jenken and Julyan for there mede;
But for lack of mony I might not spede. . . .

The taverner tooke me by the sleve,
"Sir," sayth he, "wyll yon our wyne assay?"
I answered, "That can not mutch me greve:
A peny can do no more harm than it may;"
I drank a pynt, and for it did paye,
Yet some a hungerd from thence I yede,
And wantyng money, I cold not spede.'

[went

As for the rest,—tedious, languid, halting, desolate. There are others. You may find them by the dozen in Warton or Ritson, a crowd of worthless and forgotten versifiers. We look patiently for something to exalt, to instruct, or to please; find at last in the royal James, of Scotland,—

'Be not our proude in thy prosperitie,
For as it cummis, sa will it pass away.'

and in Dunbar,—

'What is this life but ane straucht way to deid,
Whilk has a time to pass and nane to dwell?'

then we yawn, and go away, oppressed with the surfeit of dreams and abstractions, used up and barren.

As the romances declined, the lyric which sang of the outlaw and the forest, the joys and woes of love, and later of the wild border life, gradually took form. The ballad-singers outlived the troubadours, but their songs, long stored in the memories of the people, reach us only in a late edition of the fifteenth century. After the gloom of the castle and the conventionalism of the court, it is refreshing to find ourselves in the open air, under a blue sky, surrounded by persons who have human hearts in their bosoms. Listen. They are engaged in a battle of the sexes, in which attacks on the fair are parried by their eulogies. One of the heaviest charges is the imputed fickleness of woman,—

'How that it is
A labour spent in vayne,
To love them wele.'

As between libel and panegyric, you are requested to render a verdict in accordance with the evidence:

'Now I begyn

So that ye me answer;
Wherefore, all ye that present be,
I pray you, *gyve an ere.*'

In order to try the maid's affection, the lover tells her that he is condemned to a shameful death, and must withdraw as an outlaw:

*'Wherefore, adne, my owne hart true!
None other rede I can;
For I must to the grene wode go,
Alone, a banyshed man.'*

She.

'O Lord what is thys worldys blysse,
That changeth as the mone!
My somers day in lusty May
Is derked before the none.
I here yon say, Farewell: Nay, nay,
We depart nat so sone.
Why say ye so? wheder wyll ye go?
Alas! what have ye done?
All my welfare to sorrowe and care
Sholde chaunge, yf ye were gone;
For, in my mynde, of all mankynde
I love bnt you alone.

He.

I can beleve, it shall you greve,
And somewhat you dystrayne;
But afterwarde, your paynes harde
Within a day or twayne
Shall soon aslake; and ye shall take
Comfort to you agayne.
Why sholde ye ought? for, to make thought,
Your labour were in vayne.
And thus I do; and pray you to
As hartely, as I can;
For I must to the grene wode go,
Alone, a banyshed man.

She.

Now, syth that ye have shewed to me
The secret of your mynde,
I shall be playne to you agayne,
Lyke as ye shall me fynde.
Syth it so, that ye wyll go,
I wolle not leve behynde:
Shall never be sayed, the Not-browne Mayd
Was to her love unkynde:
Make you redy, for so am I,
Allthough it were anone;
For, in my mynde, of all mankynde
I love bnt you alone.

He.

I counceyle you, remember howe,
It is no maydens lawe,
Nothyng to dont, but to renne ont
To wode with an outlawe:
For ye must there in your hand bere
A bowe, redy to drawe;
And, as a thefe, thns must you lyve
Ever in drede and awe;
Whereby to yon grete harm myght growe;
Yet had I lever than,
That I had to the grene wode go,
Alone, a banyshed man.

She.

I thinke nat nay, but as ye say,
It is no maydens lore:
But love may make me for your sake,
As I have sayed before
To come on fote, to hunt, and shote
To gete us mete in store;
For so that I your company
May have, I ask no more;
From which to part, it maketh my hart
As colde as any stone:
For, in my mynde, of all mankynde
I love bnt you alone.

He.

Yet take good hede; for ever I drede
That ye coude nat sustayne
The thornie wayes, the depe valleies,
The snowe, the frost, the rayne,
The cold, the hete: for dry or wete,
We must lodge on the playne;
And, us above, none other rofe
But a brake bush, or twayne:
Which soon sholde greve you, I beleve;
And ye wolde gladly than
That I had to the grene wode go,
Alone, a banyshed man.'

He urges that she will have no wine or ale, no shelter but the trees, no society but their enemies, finally that another already

awaits him in the forest whom he loves better; still her constancy is unshaken, and in noble admiration he confesses:

‘Myne owne dere love, I se the prove
That ye be kynde, and true:
Of mayde, and wyfe, in all my lyfe,
The best that ever I knewe. . . .
Be nat dismayed: whatsoever I sayd
To you, whan I began;
I wyll nat to the grene wode go,
I am no banyshed man.’

She.

‘These tydings be more gladd to me
Than to be made a quene,
Yf I were sure they sholde endure:
But it is often sene,
Whan men wyll breke promyse, they speke
The wordes on the splene.
Ye shape some wyle me to begyle,
And stele from me, I wene:
Than were the case worse than it was,
And I more wo-begone:
For, in my mynde, of all mankynde
I love but you alone.

He.

Ye shall not nede further to drede;
I wyll not dysparage
You (God defend!) syth ye descend
Of so grete a lynage.
Now undyrstande; to Westmarlande,
Which is myne herytage,
I wyll you brynge, and with a ryng
By way of maryage
I wyll you take, and lady make,
As shortely as I can:
Thus have you now an erlys son
And not a banyshed man.’

Wherefore pay your tribute to the beautiful, notwithstanding the free insinuations of the cynic, for,—

Here may ye se, that women be
In love, meke, kynde, and stable:
Late never man reprove them then,
Or call them variable;
But, rather, pray God, that we may
To them be comfortable.’

We all need something to idealize. Science, literature, art, music, all work that way, this for one, that for another. In the popular ideal, you will discover the national character. Here it is *Robin Hood*, living in the green forest free and bold, ready to draw his bow in the sheriff’s face; generous, compassionate, giving to the poor the spoils of the rich; religious, after the fashion,—

‘A good maner then had Robyn
In land where that he were,
Every daye ere he wolde dine
Three masses wolde he hear;’

chivalrous withal, for the worship of the Virgin softens the temper of the outlaw,—

‘Robyn loved our dere lady;
For doute of dedely synne,
Would he never do company harme
That ony woman was ynne.’

Before all, fearless and valiant, and joyously so, the champion of the commons against oppression, civil and ecclesiastical. 'It is he,' says an old historian, 'whom the common people love so dearly to celebrate in games and comedies, and whose history, sung by fiddlers, interests them more than any other.' Robin dreams, 'in the greenwood where he lay,' that two yeomen are thrashing him, and he wants to go and find them, repulsing Little John, who offers to lead the way:

"Ah! John, by me thou settest noe store,
And that I farley finde;
How oft send I my men beefore,
And tarry my selfe behinde?"

He goes alone, and meets the brave Guy of Gisborne:

"Good morrow, good fellow," said Robin so fair,
"Good morrow, good fellow," quoth he,
"Methinks by the bow thou bearest in thy hand,
A good archer thou shouldst be."

"I am wandering from my way," quoth the yeoman,
"And of my morning tide."
"I'll lead thee thro' the wood," said Robin,
"Good fellow, I'll be thy guide."

"I seek an outlaw," the stranger said,
"Men call him Robin Hood,
Rather I'd meet with that proud outlaw
Than forty pound so good."

"Now come with me, thou lusty yeoman,
And Robin thou soon shall see;
But first, let us some pastime find,
Under the greenwood tree."

"Now tell me thy name, good fellow," quoth he,
"Under the leaves of lime."
"Nay, by my faith," quoth bold Robin,
"Till thou hast told me thine."

"I dwell by dale and down," quoth he,
"And Robin to take I'm sworn,
And when I'm called by my right name,
I'm Guy of good Gisborne."

"My dwelling is in this wood," says Robin,
"By thee I set right nought;
I am Robin Hood of Barnesdale,
Whom thou so long hast sought."

He that to neither were kith or kin
Might have seen a full fair sight,
To see how together these yeomen went,
With blades both brown and bright.

To see how these yeomen together they fought,
Two hours of a summer's day;
Yet neither Sir Guy nor Robin Hood
Them settled to fly away.'

These redoubtable archers fight very amicably, jovially, hating only traitors and tyrants. Bold Robin is the representative of a class who revel in fighting as a pastime. An honest exchange of blows, whoever is worsted, always prepares the way for fellowship and respect:

“‘I pass not for length,” bold Arthur reply’d,
 “My staff is of oke so free;
 Eight foot and a half, it will knock down a calf,
 And I hope it will knock down thee.”

Then Robin could no longer forbear,
 He gave him such a knock,
 Quickly and soon the blood came down
 Before it was ten a clock.

Then Arthur he soon recovered himself
 And gave him such a knock on the crown,
 That from every side of bold Robin Hood’s head
 The blood came trickling down.

Then Robin raged like a wild boar,
 As soon as he saw his own blood:
 Then Bland was in hast, he laid on so fast,
 As though he had been cleaving of wood.

And about and about and about they went,
 Like two wild bores in a chase,
 Striving to aim each other to maim,
 Leg, arm, or any other place.

And knock for knock they lustily dealt,
 Which held for two hours and more,
 Till all the wood rang at every bang,
 They plyed their work so sore.

“Hold thy hand, hold thy hand,” said Robin Hood,
 “And let thy quarrel fall;
 For here we may thrash our bones all to mesh,
 And get no coyn at all.

And in the forest of merry Sherwood,
 Hereafter thou shalt be free.”
 “God a mercy for nought, my freedom I bought,
 I may thank my staff, and not thee.”

When the bandit and his antagonists have fought to the defeat of one or the satisfaction of all, they embrace, or shake hands, then dance together on the green grass:

“Then Robin took them both by the hands,
 And danc’d round about the oke tree,
 “For three merry men, and three merry men,
 And three merry men we be.”

Will the discontent of such men be overlooked? They conquer and maintain liberty by their native roughness. Upon the haughtiest prince they impose a restraint stronger than any which mere

laws can impose. He may overstep the constitutional line; but they will exercise the like privilege whenever his encroachments are so serious as to excite alarm.

Prose.—No expansion of prose is possible, until the realities of life, political, social, and ecclesiastical, can be safely discussed. Thought was restrained in too many ways to allow much range of exercise beyond the unsubstantial realm of poetry. Hence the prose writers of the period are not numerous, and, with few exceptions, are unimportant. It is worthy of remark, however, that they exhibit three new kinds of composition,—epistolary, political, and æsthetic.

The *Paston Letters*, written chiefly by persons of rank and condition, contain many curious specimens of correspondence belonging to this and the preceding century. They are unique, and give an interesting picture of social life. In one, for example, we have a glimpse of the state of the Norfolk coast:

‘On Saturday last past, Dravall, half-brother to Warren Harman, was taken with enemies walking by the sea-side; and they have him forth with them, and they took two pilgrims, a man and a woman. . . . God give grace that the sea may be better kept than it is now, or else it shall be a perilous dwelling by the seacoast.’

One of the remarkable features of the age was the incessant litigation. Agnes Paston writes to one of her sons:

‘I greet you well, and advise you to think once of the day of your father’s counsel to learn the law, for he said many times that whosoever should dwell at Paston should have need to con to defend himself.’

One of the Pastons is reproved for his extravagance in dress and servants:

‘It is the guise of your countrymen to spend all the goods they have on men and livery gowns, and horse and harness, and so bear it out for a while, and at the last they are but beggars.’

It would appear that in what least concerns others, others most assiduously, then as now, intermeddled,—

‘The queen came into this town on Tuesday last past, afternoon, and abode here till it was Thursday afternoon; and she sent after my cousin Elizabeth Clere, to come to her: and she durst not disobey her commandment, and came to her. And when she came in the queen’s presence, the queen made right much of her, and desired her to have an husband, the which ye shall know of hereafter. *But as for that he is never nearer than he was before.*’

It seems to have been dangerous to write freely; and an opinion upon passing events or the characters of men was usually supplemented by some such sentence as,—

‘After this is read and understood, I pray you burn or break it, for I am loth to write anything of any lord.’

The profuse liberality of parliament in voting supplies to Edward IV is rebuked,—

‘The king goeth so near us in this country, both to poor and rich, that I wot not how we shall live, unless the world amend.’

The first to weigh and explain the constitution of his country was **Fortescue**, who wrote, in exile, a discourse of real and lasting value on *The Difference between an Absolute and a Limited Monarchy*, in which the state of France under a despot is contrasted with that of England. He says to the young prince whom he is instructing:

‘The same Commons be so impoverished and destroyed, that they may unneeth¹ lyve. Thay drink water, thay eate apples, with bred right brown made of rye. They eate no fleshe, but if it be selden, a litill larde, or of the entrails or heds of bests sclayne for the nobles and merchants of the land. They weryn no wollyn, but if it be a pore cote under their uttermost garment, made of grete canvass, and cal it a frok. Their hosyn be of like canvas, and passen not their knee, wherfor they be gartrid and their thyghs bare. Their wifs and children gone bare fote. . . . For sum of them, that was wonte to pay to his lord for his tenement which he hyrith by the year a sente² payth now to the kyng, over that sente, fyve skuts. Wher thurgh they be artyd³ by necessity so to watch, labour and grub in the ground for their sustenance, that their nature is much wasted, and the kynd of them brought to nowght. Thay gone crokyd and ar feeble, not able to fight nor to defend the realm; nor they have wepon, nor monye to buy them wepon withal. . . . This is the frute first of hyre Jus regale. . . . But blessed be God, this land ys rnlid under a better lawe, and therfor the people therof be not in such penurye, nor therby hurt in their persons, but they be wealthie and have all things necessarie to the sustenance of nature. Wherefore they be myghty and able to resyste the adversaries of the realms that do or will do them wrong. Loo, this is the frut of Jus politicum et regale, under which we lyve.’

In the decline of romantic literature, one last and famous effort was made, about 1470, by **Sir Thomas Malory**, in that tessellated compilement of *Morte d’Arthur*, whose mottled pieces, struck from the vast quarry of the Round Table, are squared together by no unskilful hand. Its style, always animated and flowing, mounts occasionally into the region of eloquence:

‘Oh! ye mighty and pompous lords, winning in the glories transitory of this unstable life, as in reigning over great realms and mighty great countries, fortified with strong castles and towers, edified with many a rich city; yea also, ye fierce and mighty knights, so valiant in adventurons deeds of arms, behold! behold! see how this mighty conqueror, King Arthur, whom in his human life all the world dreaded, yea also the noble Queen Guenever, which sometime sat in her chair adorned with gold, pearls, and precious stones, now lie full low in obscure foss, or pit, covered with clods of earth and clay! Behold also this mighty champion, Sir Lancelot, peerless of all knighthood; see now how he lieth grovelling upon the cold mould; now being so feeble and faint, that sometime was so terrible: how, and in what manner, ought ye to be so desirous of worldly honour

¹ Scarcely.

² About three shillings and fourpence.

³ Compelled.

so dangerous? Therefore, me thinketh this present book is right necessary often to be read; for in all ye find the most gracious, knightly, and virtuous war, of the most noble knights of the world, whereby they got praising continually; also me seemeth, by the oft reading thereof, ye shall greatly desire to accustom yourself in following of those gracious knightly deeds; that is to say, to dread God and to love righteousness, faithfully and courageously to serve your sovereign prince; and, the more that God hath given you the triumphal honour, the meeker ought ye to be, ever fearing the unstableness of this deceitful world.'

History.—The science of true history had yet no existence. All facts appeared of equal worth, for all alike cost the same toil; and, still dispersed in their insulated state, still refused combination. But the day had now arrived, in the progress of society, when chronicles were written by laymen. The first in our vernacular prose was the labor of a citizen and alderman, and sometime sheriff of London,—**Robert Fabyan**; and was designed for 'the unlettered who understand no Latin.' In the accustomed mode, he fixes the historic periods by dates from Adam or from Brut, and composing in the spirit of the day, mentions the revolutions of government with the same brevity as he speaks of the price of wheat and poultry; passes unnoticed his friend Caxton, to speak of 'a new weathercock placed on the cross of St. Paul's steeple'; tells us that of the French monarch's dress '*I might make a long rehearsal*'; finds the level of his faculties in recording 'flying dragons in the air,' or describing the two castles in space, whence issued two armies black and white, combating in the skies till the white vanished. Of Cabot's voyage of discovery, under the patronage of Henry VII, he says curiously:

'There were brought King Henry three men, taken in the new found island: they were clothed in beast's skins, and did eat raw flesh, and spake such speech as that no man could understand them; and in their demeanor were like brute beasts; whom the King kept a time after. Of the which about two years after, I saw two, apparelled after the manner of Englishmen, in Westminster palace, which at that time I could not discern from Englishmen, till I was learned what they were. But as for speech I heard none of them utter one word.'

Superstition has always attached to numbers. *Seven*, or the heptad, is very powerful for good or for evil, and belongs especially to sacred things. The good man's chronicle, opens with an invocation for help, is in seven unequal divisions, and ends with seven cheering epilogues in unmetrical metre, entitled *The Seven Joys of the Virgin*.

Theology.—All knowledge was claimed as a part of theology, and all questions were decided by scholastic rules. What-

ever was old, was divine; whatever was new, was suspected. Never had the schools of divinity made a more miserable figure. Teachers and students loaded their memories with unintelligible distinctions and unmeaning sounds, that they might discourse and dispute, with the semblance of method, upon matters which they did not understand. They still discussed whether God could have taken any form but that of man,—as, for instance, that of a woman, of the devil, of an ass, of a cucumber, of a flint. If of a cucumber, how could He have preached, wrought miracles, or been crucified? Whether Christ could be called a man while on the cross; whether the pope shared both natures with Christ; whether the Father could in any case hate the Son; whether the pope was greater than Peter, and a thousand other niceties more subtle. There now remained few of those who proved and illustrated doctrine by the positive declarations of Scripture; but upon them as upon the pedants, the mechanical manner of arguing and replying imposes its servitude. The moment they begin to reflect, Aristotle and the army of the ancients, flanked by the definition and the syllogism, enter their brains, and construct monstrous, sleep-inspiring books. Hear the worthy **Pecock**, on whose unconscious shoulders had fallen the mantle of Wycliffe. Thirteen propositions are to be demonstrated in the approved style:

‘An argument if he be ful and foormal, which is clepid a syllogisme, is mad of twey proposiciouns dryuing out of hem and bi strengthe of hem the thridde proposicioun. Of the whiche thre proposiciouns the ij. first ben clepid premissis, and the iij. folewing out of hem is clepid the conclusioun of hem. And the firste of tho ij. premissis is clepid the first premiss, and the ij. of hem is clepid the ij. premiss. And ech such argument is of this kinde, that if the bothe premissis ben trewe, the conclusioun concludid out and bi hem is also trewe; and bnt if enereither of tho premissis be trewe, the conclusioun is not trewe. Ensample her of is this. “Ech man is at Rome, the Pope is a man, eke the Pope is at Rome.” Lo here ben sett forth ij. proposiciouns, which ben these, “Ech man is at Rome;” and “The Pope is a man;” and these beu the ij. premyssis in this argument, and thei dryuen out the iij. proposicioun, which is this, “The Pope is at Rome,” and it is the conclusioun of the ij. premissis. Wherefore certis if eny man can be sikir for eny tyme that these ij. premyssis be trewe, he may be sikir that the conclusion is trewe; though alle the aungelis in heuen wolden seie and holde that thilk conclusioun were not trewe. And this is a general reule, in enery good and foormal and ful argument, that if his premissis be knowe for trewe, the conclusioun oughte to be awoid for trewe, what euer creature wole seie the contrarie.

But as for now thus niche in this wise ther of here talkid, that y be the better vndirstonde in al what y schal argne thorough this present book, y wole come douu into the xij. conclusiouns, of whiche the firste is this: It longith not to Holi Scripture, neither it is his office into which God hath him ordeyned, neither it is his part forto grovnde eny governannece or deede or service of God, or eny lawe of God, or eny trouthe

which mannis resoun bi nature may fynde, leerne, and knowe. That this conclusioun is trewe, y proue thus: Whateuer thing is ordeyned, &c.'

Enough. You are spared the dreary length, the wandering mazes, of the remainder. With all this display of logical tools, he was unable to see in what direction he was marching; for while he assailed the heretical opinions of the Lollards, he admitted that general councils were not infallible, that the Bible was the true rule of faith, that religious dogmas were to be supported by argument, not by the bare decree of authority. His well-meant defence of the Church was, in reality, a formidable attack upon its foundations. His *Repressor* was burnt, he was degraded, compelled to recant, and confined for the rest of his life in a conventual prison.

As long as visible images form the channels of religious devotion, the true history of theology, or at least of its emotional and realizing parts, may be found in the history of art. The steady tendency of European art in the fifteenth century was to give an ever-increasing preëminence to the Father, to dilate upon the vengeance of the Day of Judgment, to present to the contemplation of the faithful, in new and horrible conceptions, the sufferings of the martyrs on earth or of the lost in hell.

Ethics.—As in the dearth of genius, there were no philosophers, so there were no philosophic expositions of duty, and hence no definite ethical system distinct from theological teaching. Moral culture was, of course, the main function of the clergy, from the state of whose discipline at this time we may fairly estimate the fidelity and efficiency of their instruction. The ideal of life and character was yet ecclesiastical. It was too early for a purely moral faith, appealing to a disinterested sense of virtue and perception of excellence, to be efficacious. Rites and ceremonies, an elaborate creed and a copious legendary, were the appointed means for developing the emotional side of human nature and securing a rectitude of conduct. The formation of a moral philosophy is usually the first step in the decadence of dogmatic religions.

Science.—Those who turned their attention to mathematics or physics, still pursued the bewildering dreams of astrology and alchemy. An Act of 1456, for example, in favor of three

alchemists, describes the object of these 'famous men' to be 'a certain most precious medicine, called by some the mother and queen of medicines; by some the inestimable glory; by others the quintessence; by others the philosopher's stone; by others the elixir of life; which cures all curable diseases with ease, prolongs human life in perfect health and vigor of faculty to its utmost term, heals all healable wounds, is a most sovereign antidote against all poisons, and is capable of preserving to us, and our kingdom, other great advantages, such as the transmutation of other metals into real and fine gold and silver.'

The art of medicine appears to have made little or no progress. It was still, to some extent, in the hands of the clergy. The priests, because they were able to read the Greek and Roman authors on medicine, had, all through the dark ages, been the principal physicians. They became intimate with the barbers by frequently employing them to shave their heads, according to the uniform of the clerical order. The barbers were also employed to shave the heads of patients, when washes were prescribed to cool the fevered brain, or blisters were applied to draw the peccant humors from the surface. Found expert and handy with edged tools, the priests taught them to bleed, and to perform such minor operations as they were competent to direct, as well as to make salves and poultices, and dress wounds and sores. Edward IV, in 1461, granted a charter of incorporation and privilege to barber-surgeons; nor, though the distinct nature of the two became gradually more apparent, was the tonsorial art severed completely from the surgical till nearly three centuries had elapsed. 'Would heart of man e'er think it, but you'll be silent.'

Philosophy.—The race of great Schoolmen had died out, and the schools only repeated and maintained, with ever-increasing emptiness, what their founders had taught. The whole science of dialectic was degraded into an elaborate and ingenious word-quibbling. Like religion, it had no other substance but one of words. Syllogisms were sold like fish, by the string, and descended, like silver shoe-buckles, from generation to generation. Scholasticism was self-extinguished in a period of barbarity into whose darkness the light of the Renaissance was destined soon to shine with regenerating effect. What had the

laborers accomplished? — If from heart or brain they educed no great original creed, they produced a ferment of intellectual activity such as Europe had never seen. Through the long, terrible night which threatened the extinction of scholarship, they kept alive the spirit of culture in the whirlwind of energy. Disputation, if it adds no single idea to the human mind, is better than indolence. In action, rather than in cognition, lie life and acquirement. The highest value of truth is less in the possession than in the pursuit of it. Could you ever establish a theory of the universe, that were entire and final, man were then spiritually defunct. The one justifying service of metaphysics, in whosoever hands, is subjective,—the upward aspirations it may kindle, and the habits of close, patient, vigorous thought it may form. As for its efforts to lift the veil from the mystery of being, they are the labor of the struggling and baffled Sisyphus, who rolls up the heavy stone which no sooner reaches a certain point than down it rolls to the bottom, and all the labor is to begin again. There is scarcely anything which modern philosophers have proudly brought forward as their own that may not be found in some one or other of the mighty tomes of the hooded Scholastics. Why not? Were they not the posterity of Plato and Aristotle, out of whom come all things yet debated among men of reflection?

‘In countless upward-striving waves
The moon-drawn tide-wave strives;
In thousand far-transplanted grafts
The parent fruit survives.’

Résumé.—The throb of hope and glory which pulsed at the outset, died into inaction or despair. Disputed successions, cruel factions, family feuds, convulsed the land, till the political crisis was terminated by Henry VII, who, as the authority of the potent aristocracy declined, established that despotic regality which remained as the inheritance of the dynasty of the Tudors.

Commerce widened, material life went on, darkly, without the diviner elements of national progress. The intellect, unable to proceed in the path of creative literature, fell back into lethargy. Inquiry was repressed; originality was replaced by submission; the reformation was trodden out; in the clash of arms the voice of genius sank to feebleness or was hushed to silence; and the reactionary influence of vice, ignorance, and superstition, was in

the ascendant. The Church shrivelled into a self-seeking secular priesthood; practical religion was reduced to the accomplishment of ceremonies; and mankind, slothful and crouching, resigned their conscience and their conduct into the hands of the clergy, and they into the hands of the pope.

The century, however, was not lost. It was an age of accumulation and preparation, as indeed it was in every country of Europe. The commoners maintained their liberties, without going beyond, and waited for a better day. The Reformation, like a forest conflagration, smouldered. America was added to the map; and while thought was startled by the sudden rarity of a New World, with its fresh hopes and romantic realms, the Renaissance was restoring an old one, with its eternal promoters of freedom and beauty. In that twilight time was dawning the great Invention that should give to Letters and Science the precision and durability of the printed page. Nor was the press to be more fatal to the dominion of the priestly bigot than the bullet to the sway of the mailed knight. In the upheaval of the old feudal order, an arrogant nobility was sinking to a level more consistent with national unity. Separate centres of intrigue were breaking up, society was pulverizing afresh; poetry, like the ballad, was returning to the human interests of the present, and the night of mediævalism was drawing to a close amid the chaos which precedes the resurrection morn.

CAXTON.

O Albion! still thy gratitude confess
To Caxton, founder of the British Press:
Since first thy mountains rose, or rivers flow'd,
Who on thy isles so rich a boon bestow'd?—*M'Creery.*

Biography.—A native of Kent, born in 1412; apprenticed at an early day to a London silk dealer: after his master's death he lived—perhaps as consul or agent for the English merchants—in Holland and Flanders; while there, was appointed, by his sovereign, envoy to the court of Burgundy to negotiate a treaty of commerce; entered the service of an English princess as copy-

ist; threw aside the tedious process of the pen for the newly-discovered art, and became a printer, because—

‘My pen is worn, my hand weary and not steadfast, mine eyes dimmed with over-much looking on the white paper, and my courage not so prone and ready to labor as it hath been, and that age creepeth on me daily and feebleth all the body, and also because I have promised to divers gentlemen and to my friends to address to them as hastily as I might the said book.’

Absent more than thirty years, he returned to England with the precious freight of the printing-press; and at an age when other men seek ease and retirement, plunged with characteristic energy into his new occupation, until his decease in 1492.

Writings.—Sixty-five works, edited or translated, are assigned to the pen and the press of Caxton: in French, two; in Latin, seven; the remainder in English. He published all the native poetry of any moment then in existence,—the poems of Chaucer, Lydgate, and Gower; two chronicles, revising both, and continuing one up to his own time; a version of the *Æneid*, or a tract of Cicero, as the stray first-fruits of classic antiquity; and, with an eye to business, manuals for ecclesiastics, sermons or *Golden Legends*,—*Tales of Troy*, or *Morte d’Arthur*, for the baron and the knight,—*Æsop’s Fables* and *Reynard the Fox*, for the populace.

His *Game of Chess*, a translation from the French, ‘fynysshid the last day of Marche, 1474,’ is assumed to be the first book printed on English ground; and a second edition, the first illustrated with wood-cuts. As the aged Saxon expired dictating the last words of the *Gospel of St. John*,—

‘In the hour of death,
The last dear service of his parting breath,’—

so did the old printer carry forward his last labor, on a volume of sacred lore, to the setting sun of a life that bore its burden of four-score. He dipped, ‘half desperate,’ into that vast and singular mythology which for fourteen centuries grew and shadowed over the religious mind of Christendom as its form of hero-worship, always simple, often childish, but always good, and therefore suited to the taste and information which it measured and to which it was addressed. In this manner was the unquiet world once charmed to rest, saintly emulation, and remembrance of God:

‘Francis, servant and friend of Almighty God, was born in the city of Assyse, and was made a merchant unto the twenty-fifth year of his age, and wasted his time by living

vainly, whom our Lord corrected by the scourge of sickness, and suddenly changed him into another man, so that he began to shine by the spirit of prophecy. On a time as this holy man was in prayer, the devil called him thrice by his own name. And when the holy man had answered him, he said: "None in this world is so great a sinner, but if he convert him, our Lord would pardon him; but who that sleeth himself with hard penance, shall never find mercy." And anon, this holy man knew by revelation the fallacy and deceit of the fiend, how he would have withdrawn him fro to do well. And when the devil saw that he might not prevail against him, he tempted him by grievous temptation of the flesh. And when this holy servant of God felt that, he despoiled his clothes, and beat himself right hard with an hard cord, saying: "Thus, brother ass, it behoveth thee to remain and to be beaten." And when the temptation departed not, he went out and plunged himself in the snow, all naked, and made seven great balls of snow, and purposed to have taken them into his body, and said: "This greatest is thy wife; and these four, two ben thy daughters, and two thy sons; and the other twain, that one thy chambrere, and that other thy varlet or yeman; haste and clothe them; for they all die for cold. And if thy business that thou hast about them, grieve ye sore, then serve our Lord perfectly." And anon, the devil departed from him all confused; and St. Francis returned again unto his cell glorifying God. . . . He was ennobled in his life by many miracles: and the very death, which is to all men horrible and hateful, he admonished them to praise it. And also he warned and admonished death to come to him, and said: "Death, my sister, welcome be you." And when he came at the last hour, he slept in our Lord; of whom a friar saw the soul, in manner of a star, like to the moon in quantity, and the sun in clearness.'

Style.—His diction, never the purest, could scarcely have been improved by absence. A man destitute of a literary education could hardly attain to any felicity or skill in an idiom to which he was almost a foreigner. Plain and verbose, his manner is that of one who with no brilliancy of talent, tries faithfully to make himself understood. It is full of Gallicisms, however, in vocabulary and phrase. We learn by the preface to his *Aeneid* that there were 'gentlemen who of late have blamed me, that in my translations I had over-curious terms which could not be understood by common people.' Critics, no doubt, were abundant, when as yet there was no generally recognized standard; and he himself had neither the judgment nor the force to harmonize the heterogeneous elements. It is curious to see in his own words the unsettled state of the language, the affectation of some and the pedantry of others. 'Some honest and great clerks,' he tells us, 'have been with me, and desired me to write the most curious terms I could find.' Others, again, 'desired me to use old and homely terms in my translations.' But 'I took an old book and read therein, and certainly the English was so rude and broad I could not well understand it.' 'Fain would I please every man,' is his helpless but good-natured comment. Of the rapid flux of even common speech: 'Our language now used varieth far from that which was used and spoken when I was

born.' Not only so, but the tongue of each shire had marked peculiarities:

'In my days happened that certain marchauntes were in a shippe in Tamyse for to haue sayled over the see into Zelande, and fra lacke of wynde thei taryed at Forland, and went to lande for to refreshe them. And one of theym, named Sheffelde, a mercer, came into an hows and axed for mete, and specyally he axed after eggys; and the good wyf answerde that she conde speke no Frenshe, and the marchaunt was angry, for he also conde speke no Frenshe, but wolde have had eggys, and she understood hym not. And then, at laste, another sayd hat he would have cyren. Then the good wyf sayd that she understood hym wel. Loo, what sholde a man in theyse days now wryte, egges or *eyren*! Certaynly, it is hard to playse every man, because of diversite and chaunge of langage.'

Rank.—That he was a man of some eminence is shown by his royal connections in service. To the historian of the human mind, he appears as an indifferent translator, and a printer without erudition. That he should have been acquainted with French and German was inevitable from his continental residence. That he was unacquainted with classic Latin is evident from a reference to Skelton, whom he mentions as 'one that had read Virgil, Ovid, Tully, and all the other noble poets and orators *to me unknown*.' With the industry to keep pace with his age, he had not the genius to create a national taste by his novel and mighty instrument of thought. At a loss what author to select, his choice might seem to have been frequently accidental. With simple-hearted enthusiasm, he says of his version of Virgil:

'Having no work in hand, I sitting in my study where as lay many divers pamphlets and books, happened that to my hand came a little book in French, which late was translated out of Latin by some noble clerk of France—which book is named "*Eneydos*," and made in Latin by the noble poet and great clerk Vergyl—in which book I had great pleasure by reason of the faire and honest termes and wordes in French which I never saw to-fore-like, none so pleasant nor so well ordered, which book as me seemed should be much requisite for noble men to see, as well for the eloquence as the histories; and when I had advised me to this said book I deliberated and concluded to translate it into English, and forthwith took a pen and ink and wrote a leaf or twain.'

His simplicity far exceeded his learning. He solemnly vouched for the verity of *Jason and the Golden Fleece*, *The Life of Hercules*, and all 'the Merveilles of Virgil's Necromancy'! For a moment, 'the noble history of King Arthur' puzzled him, because—

'Dyuers men holde opynyon, that there was no suche Arthur, and that alle suche bookes as been maad of hym, ben but fayned and fables, by cause that somme cronycles make of him no mencyon ne remembre hym noo thynge ne of his knyghtes.'

But his sudden scruples were relieved when assured—

'That in hym that shold say or thynke that there was neuer suche a kyng callyd Arthur, myght wel be aretted grete folye and blyndeness. . . Fyrst ye may see his

sepulture in the monasterye of Glastyngburge. . . At Wynchester the rounde table, in other places Launcelottes swerde and many other thynges.'

Character.—Our central impression of him is that of an honest business man, resolved to get a living from his trade. His 'red pole' at the disused Scriptorium, where monks once distributed alms to the poor, modestly invited all who desired, to come and buy his wares or give orders for printing. Ran his advertisement:

'If it please any man, spiritual or temporal, to buy any pyes of two or three commemorations of Salisbury all emprynted after the form of the present letter, which be well and truly correct, let him come to Westminster into the Almonry at the red pole and he shall have them good chepe.'

Styling himself 'simple William Caxton,' he united great modesty of character to indefatigable industry. Over four thousand printed pages are of his own rendering. He speaks as a devout man, careful of happiness as of fabrics, who, while he constructs a book, studies the art of constructing human blessedness. His introduction to *Morte d'Arthur* concludes:

'And for to passe the tyme this book shal be plesaunte to rede in, but for to giue fayth and byleue that al is trewe that is conteyned herin, ye be at your lyberte, but al is wryton for our doctryne, and for to beware that we falle not to vyce ne synne, but to excercyse and folowe vertu, by whyche we may come and atteyne to good fame and renomme in thys lyf, and after this shorte and transytorye lyf to come vnto enerlastyng blysse in heuen, the whyche he graunt vs that reyneth in heuen the blessyd TrynYTE. Amen.'

It is not the exceptional things in life which are the noblest,—not the high lift nor the sudden spring of rare and exceptional persons, but the faithful every-day march of men.

Influence.—The press unfolded its vast resources tardily. In all Europe, between 1470 and 1500, ten thousand books were printed, and of them a majority in Italy; only a hundred and forty-one in England. In the next fifty years, but seven works had been printed in Scotland, and among them not a single classic. A triumph, if we consider that formerly a hundred Bibles could not be procured under an expense of twenty years' labor; but an inglorious advancement, if we consider the stupendous results since attained. Very slowly was this new appliance for the dissemination of knowledge to change the condition of society, but *thenceforth we can never speak of that condition without regard to the printing-press*. No refined consideration, no expansive views of his art, seem to have inspired our primeval

printer; but of what momentous consequences was he the initial agent! Unconsciously, he came to form a new intellectual era, to scatter the messengers of reform, to render Bibles and other books the common property of the great and the mean, to create a democracy and make a grave for tyrants; to subordinate oral and scenic to written instruction, and thus to deprive the pulpit of that supremacy which was founded on the condition of a non-reading public; to make possible a direct communication between the government and the governed, without priestly mediation, which was the first step in the separation of Church and State. Patriarch of the English press! stranger to the powers that slumber in thy craft, insensible to those elevated conceptions that guide the world's helm, yet thy honest toil for the day and honest hope for the morrow shall accrue to the advantage of mankind continually, for ever. Lad—apprentice—mercier—retainer—hoary learner—venerable printer—thou, simple man, by the accident of time and the grace of fortune, shalt live in immortal memory!

FIRST CREATIVE PERIOD.

CHAPTER VI.

FEATURES.

Under whatever point of view we consider this era, we find its political, ecclesiastical, and literary events more numerous, varied, and important than in any of the preceding ages.—*Guizot*.

To observe the connection between the successive stages of a progressive movement of the human spirit, and to recognize that the forces at work are still active, is the true philosophy of history.—*Symonds*.

Politics.—The sombre and sinister wisdom of Italian policy—a policy of refined stratagem—of ruthless but secret violence—achieved in this age the tranquillity of a settled state and the establishment of a civilized but imperious despotism. The title of Henry VIII was undisputed—the first such in a hundred years—his temper hot, his spirit high, and his will supreme. Every public officer was his crouching menial. Wolsey, his minister, devoted his learning and abilities to the personal pleasure of the master who might destroy him by a breath. Under the administration of Cromwell, an organized reign of terror held the nation panic-stricken at Henry's feet. Judges and juries were coerced. Parliament was degraded into the mere engine of absolutism. His faithful Commons, hesitating to pass the bill for the dissolution of the monasteries, were summoned into his presence. 'I hear,' said the magnificent despot, 'that my bill will not pass; but I will have it pass, or I will have some of your heads.' It passed! The imagination of his subjects—to whom his reign, on the whole, was decidedly beneficial—was overawed. To them he was something high above the laws which govern ordinary men. In the midst of his barbarous cruelties he appeared the avenging minister of heaven, who, in renouncing the papacy, had burst asunder the prison-gates of Rome.

The counsellors of Edward VI, with less of the sanguinary

spirit of his father, were as unscrupulous in bending the rules of law and justice to their purpose in cases of treason. They were a designing oligarchy, from whom no measure conducive to liberty and justice could be expected to spring. They had not, however, the sinews to wield the iron sceptre of Henry, and the increased weight of the Commons appears in the repeal of former statutes that had terrified and exasperated the people; in the rejection of bills sent down from the Upper House; in the anxiety of the court, by the creation of new boroughs,¹ to obtain favorable elections.

The reign of Mary is memorable as a period of bloody persecution. Popery was restored, Protestants were imprisoned and burned for no other crime than their religion; stretches of prerogative in matters temporal were more violent and alarming; torture was more frequent than in all former ages combined, and a commission issued in 1557 has the appearance of a preliminary step to the Inquisition. A proclamation, after denouncing the importation of books filled with heresy and treason, declared that whoever should be found to have such books in his possession, should be considered a rebel and executed according to martial law. Yet not even she could preserve the absolute dominion of her father Henry. While in his reign the Lower House only once rejected a measure recommended by the Crown, in hers the first two Parliaments were dissolved on this account, and the third, refusing to pass several of her favorite bills, was far from obsequious. Still less was the English spirit, which had controlled princes in the fulness of their pride, broken. The reproach of servility under usurped powers belongs less to the people than to their natural leaders—the compliant nobility. The reign of each of the Tudors was disturbed by formidable discontents. Each had the discretion never to carry oppression to a fatal point.

The tone and temper of Elizabeth's administration were displayed in a vigilant execution of severe statutes, especially upon the Romanists, and in occasional stretches of power beyond the law, while the superior wisdom of her counsellors led them generally to shun the more violent measures of the late reigns. To high assumptions of prerogative, the resistance of Parliament

¹ Twenty-two were created or restored in this short reign.

became insensibly more vigorous. If, in the House of Commons, many were creatures of the Royal Council, grasping at preferment, others with inflexible aim recurred in every session to an important guarantee of civil liberty,—the right to inquire into public grievances and obtain redress. Now it was, perhaps for the first time, that the Commons asserted the privilege of determining contested elections. The finger of this sovereign was ever on the public pulse, and she knew exactly when she could resist and when she must retreat.

The same jealousy of the aristocracy turned the genius of the maiden queen to a new source of influence, unknown to her ancestors,—the people, a people divided by creeds and dogmas, but made compliant and coherent by the firmness and the indulgence of the wisest policy. While she ruled them with a potent hand, she courted their eyes and hearts. She it was who, studying their wants and wishes, first gave the people a theatre ‘for the recreation of our loving subjects as for our solace and pleasure.’ She subdued by yielding. Her sex and graciousness inspired a reign of love, and her energies contributed to make it one of enterprise and emulation—a new era of adventure and glory. Elizabeth, living in the hearts of her people, survived in their memories. Her birthday was long observed as a festival day. Every sign of the growing prosperity told in her favor, and her worst acts failed to dim the lustre of the national ideal.

Society.—The monarchy established peace, and with peace came the useful arts and domestic comfort. The development of manufactures was gradually absorbing the unemployed. Under Elizabeth commerce began that rapid career which has made Englishmen the carriers of the world. The burst of national vigor found new outlets in the marts of the Mediterranean and Baltic. In 1553 was founded a company to trade with Russia. In 1578 Drake circumnavigated the globe. In 1600 the East India Company was founded. Henry VIII at the beginning of his reign had but one ship of war. Elizabeth sent out one hundred and fifty against the Armada. Agriculture was so improved that the produce of an acre was doubled. Dwellings of brick and stone were superseding the straw-thatched cottages, plastered with coarsest clay and often on fire. With open admiration,

Harrison notes, 1580, three important changes in the farm-houses of his time:

‘One is the multitude of chimnies lately erected, whereas in their yoong daies were not above two or three, if so manie, in most uplandishe townes of the realme. . . . The second is the great amendment of lodging, although not generall, for our fathers, (yea and we ourselves also) have lien full oft upon straw pallets, on rough mats covered onlie with a sheet, under coverlets made of dogswain, or hopharlots, and a good round log under their heads, instead of a bolster or pillow. If it were so that the good man of the house had within seven years after his marriage purchased a matteres or flockebed, and thereto a sacke of chaffe to rest his head upon, he thought himselfe to be as well lodged as the lord of the towne. . . . Pillowes (said they) were thought meet onelie for women in childbed. . . . The third thing is the exchange of vessell, as of treene platters into pewter, and wodden spoons into silver or tin; for so common was all sorts of treene stuff in olden time, that a man should hardlie find four peeces of pewter (of which one was peradventure a salt) in a good farmers house.’

Looking-glasses imported from France began to displace the small mirrors of polished steel. Carpets were used rather for covering tables than floors, which latter were generally strewn with rushes. Forks were as yet unheard of, but knives—first made in England in 1563—and spoons were ornamented with some care. Gloomy walls and serried battlements disappeared from the palaces of the noblesse, half Gothic, half Italian, covered with picturesque gables, fretted fronts, gilded turrets, and adorned with terraces and vast staircases, with gardens, fountains, vases, and statues. The prodigal use of glass was a marked feature—one whose sanitary value can hardly be overestimated. ‘You shall have,’ grumbles one, ‘your houses so full of glass that we can not tell where to come to be out of the sun or the cold.’ The master no longer rode at the head of his servants, but sat apart in his ‘coach.’ The first carriage, 1564, caused much astonishment; some calling it ‘a great sea-shell from China,’ others ‘a temple in which cannibals worshipped the devil.’ Gentlemen placed their glory less in the conquests of the battle-axe and sword than in the elegance and singularity of their dress. ‘Do not,’ says a bitter Puritan, ‘both men and women, for the most part, every one, in general, go attired in silks, velvets, damasks, satins, and what not, which are attire only for the nobility and gentry, and not for the others at any hand?’ They wore hats ‘perking up like the spear or shaft of a temple,’ or hats ‘flat and broad on the crown like the battlements of a house’; hats of silk, velvet, and of ‘fine hair, which they call beaver, fetched from beyond the seas, from whence a great sort of other vanities do come besides’; cloaks of sable, ornamented shirts; coats

diversified with oxen and goats; velvet shoes, covered with rosettes and ribbons; boots with falling tops, hung with lace, and embroidered with figures of birds, animals, flowers of silver and gold. When Elizabeth died, three thousand dresses were found in her wardrobe. Feasts were carnivals of splendor. Entertainments were like fairy scenes. Sober thrift was forgotten in the universal expanse. Gallants gambled a fortune at a sitting, then sailed for the New World, in quest of a fresh one. Dreams of El Dorados lured the imagination of the meanest seaman. The advance of corporal well-being disclosed itself in the manners and tastes of all ranks—at the base as well as on the summit. The growth of the humanities is seen in the establishment of hospitals or retreats for the infirm and needy, and houses of correction for the vagrant and vicious.

Not modern England yet. Herds of deer strayed in vast and trackless forests. Fens forty or fifty miles in length reeked with miasm and fever. The population—barely five millions—was perpetually thinned by pestilence and want, whose triumphs were numbered by the death-crier in the streets or the knell for the passing soul. The peasants shivered in their mud-built hovels, where chimneys still were rare. For the poor there was no physician; for the dying—till the monasteries were suppressed—the monk and his crucifix. For a hundred years, agrarian changes had been leading to the mergence of smaller holdings and the introduction of sheep-farming on an enormous scale. Merchants, too, were investing heavily in land, and these ‘farming gentlemen’ were under little restraint in the eviction of the smaller tenants. The farmers, according to More, were ‘got rid of either by fraud or force, or tired out with repeated wrongs into parting with their property.’ He adds:

‘In this way it comes to pass that these poor wretches, men, women, husbands, orphans, widows, parents with little children, householders greater in number than in wealth (for arable farming requires many hands, while one shepherd and herdsman will suffice for a pasture farm), all these emigrate from their native fields without knowing where to go.’

Homeless wanderers, they joined the army of beggars, marauders, vagabonds,—a vast mass of disorder on which every rebellion might count for support. The poor man, if unemployed, preferring to be idle, might be demanded for service by any master of

his vocation, and compelled to work. If caught begging once, and neither aged nor infirm, he was whipped at the cart's tail. For a second offence, his ear was slit, or bored through with a hot iron. For a third,—proved thereby to be useless to himself and hurtful to others,—he suffered death as a felon. This law, enacted in 1536, and subsisting for sixty years, expressed the English conviction that it is better for a man not to live at all than to live a profitless and worthless life,—so reaching, perhaps, the heart of the whole matter. *Rogue, mendicant, thief*, were practically synonymous terms, embracing,—

‘All persons calling themselves scholars, going about begging; all seafaring men pretending losses of their ships and goods on the sea; all idle persons going about either begging, or using any subtle craft or unlawful games and plays, or feigning to have knowledge in physiognomy, palmistry, or other like crafty science, or pretending that they can tell destinies, fortunes, or such other fantastical imaginations, all fencers, bear-wards, common players and minstrels; all jugglers.’

Travelling required strong nerves. Some one petitions that ‘parties of horse be stationed all along the avenues of the city of London, so that if a coach or wagon wanted a convoy, two or three or more may be detached.’ Sometimes, says More, you might see a score of thieves hung on the same gibbet. In the county of Somerset alone, we find the magistrates capturing a hundred at a stroke, hanging fifty at once, and impatient to swing the rest. On the byways, as on all the highways, stand the gallows. Beneath the idea of order is the idea of the scaffold. Savage energy remains. The living are cut down, disembowelled, quartered. ‘When his heart was cut out, he uttered a deep groan.’ London witnesses the fearful spectacle of a living human being—a poisoner—boiled to death, ‘to the terrible example of all others.’ Judge of the moral tone by the utter absence of personal feeling. With business-like brevity, as if the thing were perfectly natural, Cromwell ticks off human lives:

‘Item, the Abbot of Reading to be sent down to be tried and executed at Reading.’
 ‘Item, when Master Fisher shall go to his execution, and the other.’

Honor, beauty, youth, and genius went quietly to the block, as if bloodshed were an accepted system. With the utmost equanimity, as if no murder could be extraordinary, Holinshed relates:

‘The five and twentieth daie of Maie (1535) was in saint Paules church at London examined nineteen men and six women born in Holland, whose opinions were (heretical). Fourteene of them were condemned, a man and a woman of them were burned in Smith-field, the other twelve were sent to other townes, there to be burnt. On the nineteenth

of June were three moonkes of the Charterhouse hanged, drawne, and quartered at Tiburne, and their heads and quarters set up about London, for denieng the king to be supreme head of the church. Also the one and twentieth of the same moneth, and for the same cause, doctor John Fisher, bishop of Rochester, was beheaded for denieng of the supremacie, and his head set upon London bridge, but his bodie buried within Barking churchyard. The pope had elected him a cardinall, and sent his hat as far as Calais, but his head was off before his hat was on: so that they met not. On the sixth of Julie was Sir Thomas Moore beheaded for the like crime, that is to wit, for denieng the king to be supreme head.'

In such a state, man can be happy—like swine. He is still a primitive animal, too heavy for refined sensations, too vehement for restraint; a hive of violent and uncurbed instincts, seeking only expansion, and, to that end, ready to appeal at once to arms. Says a correspondent:

'On Thursday laste, as my Lorde Rytche was rydyng in the streates, there was one Wyndam that stode in a dore, and shotte a dagge at him, thynkyng to have slayne him. . . . The same daye, also, as Sir John Conway was goyng in the streetes, Mr. Lodovyke Grevell came sodenly upon him, and stroke him on the hedd with a sworde. . . . I am forced to trouble your Honors with thes tryflyng matters, for I know no greater.'

His enjoyment, if lacking decency, is heartfelt—the overflowing of a coarse animation. Bear and bull baitings are the delight of all classes, a 'charming entertainment' even to the queen. Cock-fighting and throwing at cocks are regularly introduced into the public schools. They feast copiously, furnishing their tables as if to revictual Noah's ark. They drink without ceasing, as when they crossed the sea in leather boats; as now in Germany, where to drink is to drink for ever. Their holidays, with which tradition had filled the year, are the incarnation of natural life. Stubbes, whose mind is burdened with the pitiless doctrines of Calvin, says, with morose impatience:

'First, all the wilde heades of the parishe, conventying together, chuse them a ground capitaine of mischief, vhan they innoble with the title of my Lorde of Misserule, and hym they crown with great solemnitie, and adopt for their kyng. This kyng anoynted, chuseth for the twentie, fourtie, three score or a hundred lustie guttes like to hymself to waite uppon his lordely maiestie. . . . Then have they their hobbie horses, dragons, and other antiques together with their baudie pipers and thundering drommers, to strike up the devilles daunce withall: then marche these heathen companie towardes the churche and churche-yarde, their pipers pipyng, their drommers thonderyng, their stumpes dauncyng, their belles rynglyng, their hankercheefes swyngyng about their heades like madmen, their hobbie horses and other monsters skirmishyng amongst the throng; and in this sorte they goe to the churche (though the minister bee at praier or preachyng), dauncyng and swyngyng their hankercheefes over their heads, in the churche, like devilles incarnate, with such a confused noise, that no man can heare his owne voice. Then the foolishe people they looke, they stare, they laugh, they fleere, and mount upon formes and pewes, to see these goodly pageauntes, solemnized in this sort. Then after this, aboute the churche they goe againe and againe, and so forthe into the churche-yarde, where they have commonly their sommer haules, their bowers, arbors and banquettyng

houses set up, wherein they feaste, banquet, and daunce all that daie, and preadventure all that night too. And thus these terrestriall furies spend the Sabboath daie.'

And,—

'Against Maie, every parishe, towne and village assemble themselves together, bothe men, women, and children, olde and yong, even all indifferently; they goe to the woodes where they spende all the night in pleasant pastymes, and in the mornyng they returne, bringing with them birch, bowes, and branches of trees, to deck their assemblies withall. But their cheefest iewell they bringe from thence is their Maie poole, which they bring home with great veneration, as thus: They have twenty or fourtie yoke of oxen, every ox havng a sweete nose-gaile of flowers tyed on the tippe of his hornes, and these oxen drawe home this Maie poole (this stinkyng idoll rather), . . . and thus beyng reared up, they strave the grounde aboute, binde greene boughes about it, sett up sommer haules, bowers, and arbours hard by it; and then fall they to banquet and feast, to leape and dance aboute it, as the heathen people did at the dedication of their idoll'es.'

What literature will this life create? You will see it all there, reflected in the drama, reproduced on the stage,—free and liberal living, a masquerade of splendor, vice raging without shame, a prodigality of carnage,—a young world, natural, unshackled, and tragic.

The Reformation.—Society is not possible without religion, and neither society nor religion can be founded only on the pursuit of pleasure and of power. Recall the secular irritations whose momentum had long been gathering for the impending outbreak. Imagine, if you can, the secret anger which the custom of sanctuary alone must have excited. Says the Venetian ambassador at the English court in 1502:

'The clergy are they who have the supreme sway over the country, both in peace and war. Among other things, they have provided that a number of sacred places in the kingdom should serve for the refuge and escape of all delinquents; and no one, were he a traitor to the crown, or had he practised against the king's own person, can be taken out of these by force. And a villain of this kind, who, for some great excess that he has committed, has been obliged to take refuge in one of these sacred places, often goes out of it to brawl in the public streets, and then, returning to it, escapes with impunity for every fresh offence he may have been guilty of. This is no detriment to the purses of the priests, nor to the other perpetual sanctuaries; but every church is a sanctuary for forty days; and if a thief or murderer, who has taken refuge in one, cannot leave it in safety during those forty days, he gives notice that he wishes to leave England. In which case, being stripped to the shirt by the chief magistrate of the place, and a crucifix placed in his hand, he is conducted along the road to the sea, where, if he finds a passage, he may go with a "God speed you." But if he should not find one, he walks into the sea up to the throat, and three times asks for a passage; and this is repeated till a ship appears, which comes for him, and so he departs in safety. It is not unamusing to hear how the women and children lament over the misfortune of these exiles, asking "how they can live so destitute out of England"; adding, moreover, that "they had better have died than go out of the world," as if England were the whole world.'

Visible acts and invisible thoughts were environed and held down by an ecclesiastical code, which, only a vehicle for extor-

tion, changed the police into an inquisition. 'Heresy,' 'witchcraft,' 'impatient words,' 'absence from church,' an offence imputed or suspected, resulted in heavy fines, imprisonment, abjuration, public penance, and the menace or sentence of the torture and the stake. A Northman, a follower of Luther, an artist, grouped and portrayed the infamy and glory of his age, — Christ bleeding in the last throes of a dying life, angels full of anguish catching in their vessels the holy blood, the stars veiling their face, a heretic bound to a tree and torn with the iron-pointed lash of the executioner, another praying with clasped hands while an auger is screwed into his eye, men and women hurled at the lance's point from the crest of a hill into the abyss below. On the other hand, an atrocious crime, the mortal sin of a priest, could be expiated by an indifferent penance or the payment of a few shillings. But the crimes of the clergy were exceeded by their licentiousness. These are the most moderate lines in a satire of 1528:

'What are the bishops divines? . . .
 To forge excommunications,
 For tythes and decimations
 Is their continual exercise. . . .
 Rather than to make a sermon.
 To follow the chase of wild deer,
 Passing the time with jolly cheer.
 Among them all is common
 To play at the cards and dice;
 Some of them are nothing nice
 Both at hazard and momchance;
 They drink in golden bowls
 The blood of poor simple souls
 Perishing for lack of sustenance.
 Their hungry cures they never teach,
 Nor will suffer none other to preach.'¹

In Latimer's opinion, only one bishop in all England was faithful:

'I would ask a strange question. Who is the most diligent bishop and prelate in all England, that passeth all the rest in doing of his office? I can tell, for I know him who it is; I know him well. But now I think I see you listening and hearkening that I should name him. There is one that passeth all the others, and is the most diligent prelate and preacher in all England. And will ye know who it is? I will tell you. It is the devil. Therefore, ye unpreaching prelates, learn of the devil to be diligent in your office. If ye will not learn of God, for shame learn of the devil.'

It was the frightful depravity of Rome that startled Luther into revolt. He went there an eager pilgrim, trudging penniless and barefoot across the Alps, as to the city of the saints, and

¹ Roy's *Burying of the Mass*.

the palace of the Pope, fragrant with the odors of Paradise. 'Blessed Rome,' he cried as he entered the gate, — 'Blessed Rome sanctified with the blood of martyrs!' 'Adieu!' he cried as he fled, 'let all who would lead a holy life depart from Rome. Every thing is permitted in Rome except to be an honest man.' Romanism was turned into a carnival of vice in which all that is high and pure in man is smothered by corruption, and a circus of ostentation where the kingdom of heaven is bought and sold. In 1517 a new cathedral¹ was in progress, that should dwarf the proudest monuments of art. Agents were sent about Europe with sacks of indulgences and dispensations — letters of credit on heaven. Archbishops were promised half the spoil for their support. Streets were hung with flags to receive them, bells were rung to welcome them; nuns and monks walked in procession before and after, while the vender himself sat in a chariot, with the Papal Bull on a velvet cushion in front. The sale-rooms were the churches. Amid the blazing candles of the altar, the agent explained the efficacy of his medicines, declaring all sins blotted out 'as soon as the money chinks in the box.' Acolytes walked through the crowds, clinking the plates, and crying, 'Buy, buy!'

Now consider the national temper and inclinations, which long before the great outburst were muttering ominously. The words of the consecration, the most sacred of the old worship, *Hoc est corpus*, were travestied into a nickname for jugglery — *hocus pocus*. Priests were hooted or knocked down in their walks. Women refused the sacrament from their hands. An apparitor, sent by the church to secure her dues, was driven out with insults: 'Go thy way, thou stynkyng knave; ye are but knaves and brybours, everych one of you.' Another's head was broken. A waiter fell in trouble for saying that 'the sight of a priest did make him sick,' also, 'that he would go sixty miles to indiet' one. In one diocese a woman was summoned and tried for turning her face from the cross; several for not saying their prayers in church, remaining seated 'dumb as beasts'; three for passing a night together reading a book of the Scriptures; a thresher for asserting, as he pointed to his work, that he was going to make God come out of his straw. Latimer announced

¹ St. Peter's, designed by Angelo.

one day that he would preach in a certain place. On the morrow, proceeding to his appointment, he found the doors closed, and waited more than an hour for the key. At last a man came, and said: 'Syr, thys ys a busye day with us; we cannot heare you: it is Robyn Hoodes Daye.' Straws on the stream. The thoughtful and the learned had come to smile at the extent of human credulity. Erasmus visits the shrine at Walsingham. An attendant, like a modern guide, shows him the wonders:

'The joint of a man's finger is exhibited to us, the largest of three. I kiss it; and I then ask, "Whose relics were these?" He says, "St. Peter's." "The apostle?" He said, "Yes." Then, observing the size of the joint, which might have been that of a giant, I remarked, "Peter must have been a man of very large size." At this one of my companions burst into a laugh, which I certainly took ill, for if he had been quiet the attendant would have shown us all the relics.'

His attention is called to the milk of the Virgin, 'what looked like ground chalk mixed with white of egg,' and he inquires as civilly as he may by what proofs he is assured of its genuineness:

'The canon, as if possessed by a fury, looking aghast upon us, and apparently horrified at the blasphemous inquiry, replied, "What need to ask such questions, when you have the authenticated inscription?"'

The contagion spreads, reaches even men in office. When the enormities of the English monks are read in Parliament, there is nothing but the cry of 'Down with them!' Henry permits the 'free and liberal use' of the Scriptures. Never were they so eagerly and artlessly scrutinized. Every impression made a furrow. Girls took them to church, and studied them ostentatiously during matins. Grave judges, charging the jury, prefaced their charges by a text. Every reader became an expounder, and the nation abounded with disputants. They reasoned about the sacred volume in taverns and alehouses. In vain the king, irritated at the universal distraction of opinion, orders them not to rely too much on their own ideas, and restricts the privilege to the nobility and gentry. In the solitude of the fields, in concealment, under their smoky lights, by their fires of turf, they spell out the Bible, discuss it, ponder it. One hides it in a hollow tree, another commits a chapter to memory, so as to be able to revolve it even in the presence of his accusers. They see a companion or relative bound amid the smoke, encourage him, cry out to him that his cause is just, hear his last appeals to God, and meditate on them darkly, passionately.

Twice had the storm gathered and passed. Twice had the

mind of Europe risen in vain against the domination of Rome; first in France, then in England and Bohemia. But now the invention of printing, which supplied her assailants with unwonted weapons, the study of the classics, the vices of the Roman clergy,—these things conspired to achieve in the sixteenth century what was impossible in the fourteenth or fifteenth. More powerful still, because more general: for five centuries the energies of the human spirit had been accumulating. Never had it greater activity, never so imperious a desire to advance. On the contrary, the Church, which governed the intellect and the heart, had fallen into a state of imbecility and remained stationary. Insurrection was the result. The forward impulse—ethical and intellectual—resisted by the moral inertness, but accumulated to excess, burst out, and produced the Reformation. The change was essentially moral. Its mainspring was the awakened conscience—not the revolutionary desire to experimentalize abstract truth, but the indignation of righteousness, the fundamental anxiety to seize upon truth and justice. It is the genius of the Germanic peoples—the idea of duty blooming afresh amid the mighty upgrowth of all human ideas, the sombre Semitic conception of the vast and solitary Being, whose commands, whose vengeance, whose promises and threats, fill, occupy, and direct their thoughts. They ask, with Luther, ‘What is righteousness, and how shall I obtain it?’ Troubled and anxious, their light failing, themselves groping, they cry from the abyss:

‘Almighty and most merciful Father; we have erred, and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own heart. We have offended against Thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; And we have done those things which we ought not to have done; And there is no health in us. But Thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare Thou them, O God, which confess their faults. Restore Thou them that are penitent; According to Thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for His sake; That we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life.’

‘Almighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that Thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent; Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of Thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness.’¹

It is this conscience that made believers strong against all the revulsions of nature and all the trembling of the flesh. Many went to the stake cheerfully, and all bravely, deeming the ‘cross

¹*Book of Common Prayer*, 1548; subsequently, at different periods, undergoing several changes.

of persecution' an 'inestimable jewel.' 'No one will be crowned,' said one of them, 'but they who fight like men, and he who endures to the end shall be saved.' Latimer at eighty, refusing to retract, after two years of prison and waiting, was burned. His companion, ready to be chained to the post, said aloud: 'O heavenly Father, I give thee most hearty thanks, for that thou hast called me to be a professor of thee, even unto death!' Latimer in his turn, when they brought the lighted fagots, uttered the thrilling words: 'Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man: we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out.' A youth, an apprentice to a silk-weaver, doomed to die if he does not recant, is exhorted by his parents to stand firm:

'Then William said to his mother, "For my little pain which I shall suffer, which is but a short braid, Christ hath promised me, mother (said he), a crown of joy: may you not be glad of that, mother?" With that his mother kneeled down on her knees, saying, "I pray God strengthen thee, my son, to the end; yea, I think thee as well-bestowed as any child that ever I bare." . . . Then William Hunter plucked up his gown, and stepped over the parlour groundsel, and went forward cheerfully; the sheriff's servant taking him by one arm, and I his brother by another. And thus going in the way, he met with his father according to his dream, and he spake to his son weeping, and saying, "God be with thee, son William"; and William said, "God be with you, good father, and be of good comfort; for I hope we shall meet again, when we shall be merry." His father said, "I hope so, William"; and so departed. So William went to the place where the stake stood, even according to his dream, where all things were very unready. Then William took a wet broom-faggot, and kneeled down thereon and read the fifty-first Psalm, till he came to these words, "The sacrifice of God is a contrite spirit; a contrite and a broken heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." . . . Then said the sheriff, "Here is a letter from the queen. If thou wilt recant thou shalt live; if not thou shalt be burned." "No," quoth William, "I will not recant, God willing." Then William rose and went to the stake, and stood upright to it. Then came one Richard Ponde, a bailiff, and made fast the chain about William. Then said master Brown, "Here is not wood enough to burn a leg of him." Then said William, "Good people! pray for me, and make speed and despatch quickly; and pray for me while you see me alive, good people! and I will pray for you likewise." "How?" quoth master Brown, "pray for thee! I will pray no more for thee than I will pray for a dog." . . . Then was there a gentleman which said, "I pray God have mercy upon his soul." The people said, "Amen, Amen." Immediately was fire made. Then William cast his psalter right into his brother's hand, who said, "William! think on the holy passion of Christ, and be not afraid of death." And William answered, "I am not afraid." Then lift he up his hands to heaven, and said, "Lord, Lord, Lord, receive my spirit"; and, casting down his head again into the smothering smoke, he yielded up his life for the truth, sealing it with his blood to the praise of God.¹

The same sentiment, alas, made them tyrants after it had made them martyrs. While the Reformation was demanding freedom of thought for itself, it was violating that right towards others. Both Reformers and Papists held it right to inflict coercion and

¹ Fox's *Book of Martyrs*.

death upon those who denied what they regarded as the essential faith. The first never doubted that truth was on their side, the second were no less confident; and both required with equal ardor the princes of their party to wield the temporal sword against the other. The innovators were not emancipated from the corrupt principles of the age, and there is no little warrant for the taunt that they were against burning only when they were in fear of it themselves. Calvin burned Servetus for heresy. Speaking to the Earl of Somerset, he expressly says of the Papists and Dissenters, 'They ought to be repressed by the avenging sword which the Lord has put into your hands.' Cranmer caused a woman to be burned for some opinion about the Incarnation. In the reign of Henry VIII, the story of martyrdoms convulsed the Catholic world; in that of Mary, nearly three hundred Protestants let themselves be burned rather than abjure; in that of Elizabeth, a hundred and sixty Catholics were put to death. We shall do well, however, to bear in mind the temper of the men with whom the Reformers had to deal. They remembered that when their teaching began to spread in the Netherlands, an edict was issued, under which fifty thousand of them, first and last, were deliberately murdered.

About the year 1520, when Luther publicly burned at Wittenberg the bull of Leo X, containing his condemnation, the movement definitely began which was to raise the whole of Europe and change the spiritual history of mankind. Slowly, with mistrust, from self-interest, Henry VIII laid the axe to the tree. In 1534, Parliament enacted that the king —

'shall be taken, accepted, and repented the only supreme Head in earth of the Church of England, and shall have and enjoy annexed and united to the Imperial Crown of this realm as well the title and style thereof as all the honors, jurisdictions, authorities, immunities, profits, and commodities to the said dignity belonging, with full power to visit, repress, redress, reform, and amend all such errors, heresies, abuses, contempts, and enormities, which by any manner of spiritual authority or jurisdiction might or may lawfully be reformed.'

Denial was treason, and treason death. A second blow was struck, and the monasteries were lopped off, their relics cast out, their shrines levelled, their estates appropriated by the court and nobility, the monks sent wandering into the world, and the bishops looked helplessly on while their dominion was trodden under foot. Henry VIII, by brute force, wrought out only a purified Catholicism differing in theory from the Roman Catholic faith on

the point of supremacy and on that point alone. Above the roar of controversy, he told the people, in six articles,¹ how to worship and what to believe. Assailed with equal fury by those who were zealous for either the new or the old, he burned as heretics such as avowed the tenets of Luther, and hanged as traitors such as owned the authority of the Pope. His system, too hazardous to maintain, died with him. Under the Regency of his infant son, the Six Articles were repealed; the prohibitions of Lollardy were removed; the churches were emptied of pictures and images; priests, descending from their stone altars to wooden tables, were once more equals, and married like the rest; the Book of Common Prayer was restored, to knock at the door of every soul with its imposing supplications; old customs were broken. Cranmer, who had been slowly drifting, set the example. 'This year,' says a contemporary, 'the Archbishop of Canterbury did eat meat openly in Lent in the hall of Lambeth, the like of which was never seen since England was a Christian country.'

Mary undid all that had been done by her father and brother. Not only were the old doctrines and ceremonies restored; the supremacy was resigned to the Pope. But the new worship became popular through the triumph of its martyrs, and became national on the accession of Elizabeth—national by the constraint of internal sentiment and the pressure of foreign hostility. England is henceforth Protestant; her faith, a part of the Constitution, an alliance of the worldly and religious enemies of popery, a union of the court and the cloister, of the State and the Church; linked to the throne by the two Acts of headship and uniformity; in its doctrinal structure, tolerant; in its political structure, persecuting. For a government whose organic principle is synthetic and monarchical will not patiently submit to dissension whose tendency is analytic and republican.

To this day, the Established Church bears the visible imprint of her origin. Like her imperial parent, she has her chief magistrate; she retains episcopacy, without declaring it to be essential; she copies the daily chant of the monk, though translating it into the vulgar tongue and inviting the multitude to join its voice to that of the minister; without asking for the intercession of the

¹ Transubstantiation, celibacy, vows, mass, confession, withholding the cup from the laity.

saints, she has her festival-days for her great benefactors; discarding a crowd of pantomimic gestures, she marks the sprinkled infant with the sign of the cross; condemning the idolatrous adoration of the bread and wine, she requires them to be received in a meekly kneeling posture; rejecting many rich vestments, she yet keeps the robe of white; without the gloomy monotony of the middle-age litany, the organ-led music now thunders forth glory to God, now whispers to the broken in spirit;—in short, a flourishing branch, shooting forth in the open air, amid satin doublets and stage attitudes, amid youthful bluster and fashionable prodigality; friendly to the beautiful, which it does not proscribe, and to fancy, which it does not attempt to fetter.

Only by a very slow process does the human mind emerge from a system of error. The excesses of vice had been repressed without attacking its source. Many persons, with a severer ideal, thought that the interests of pure religion required a reform far more searching and extensive. They would have a service without shred or fragment of Rome. One protests: ‘I can’t consent to wear the surplice, it is against my conscience; I trust by the help of God, I shall never put on that sleeve, which is a mark of the beast.’ And another: ‘God by Isaiah commandeth not to pollute ourselves with the garments of the image.’ As they could not be convinced, they were persecuted — imprisoned, fined, pilloried, their noses slit, their ears cut off. From being a sect, they consequently became a faction. To hatred of the authorized church was added hatred of the royal authority. So, underneath the established Protestantism is propagated an interdicted Protestantism,—*Puritanism*, whose intermingled sentiments, each embittering the other, will produce the English Revolution.

If now we inquire what were the ultimate results of the Reformation, it can hardly escape observation:

1. That it banished, or nearly so, religion from politics, and secularized government.

2. That, leaving the mind subject to the variable influence of political institutions, it yet procured, by disarming the spiritual power, a great increase of liberty—a liberty which redounded to the advantage of morality and of science.

3. That rejecting much of the polity and ritual of the mystical Babylon, it rendered possible that steady movement by which theology has since been gravitating towards the moral faculty.

4. That it introduced religion into the midst of the laity, which till then had been the exclusive domain of the ecclesiastical order.

5. That, begetting a war of tracts and disputations, whether conqueror or conquered, it effected an immense progress in mental activity.

6. That, by arousing Rome to impose upon herself an instant counter-reform, it gave an improved tone to all ecclesiastical grades.

Inestimable as are these blessings, it were idle to deny that the Reformation aggravated, for a time, unavoidably, some of the evils it was intended to correct. It was the culminating fact in a train of circumstances that had diffused through Christendom an intense and vivid sense of Satanic agency. When the mind, without power of sound judgment, is fallen upon times in which tendencies and passions rage with tempestuous violence, it turns readily to the miraculous as the solution of all phenomena, and phantoms are transfigured into realities through the mists of hope and fear. Men, superstitious and terror-stricken, listen then with wide ears and fantastic foreshadowings, momentarily expecting the thunderbolts of God, and feeling upon them the claw of the devil. Cranmer, in one of his articles of visitation, directs his clergy to seek for ‘any that use charms, sorcery, enchantments, witchcraft, soothsaying, or *any like craft invented by the Devil.*’ Under Henry VIII, there were a few executions for supposed dealings with the Evil One; but the law on the subject in the following reign was repealed, nor again renewed till the accession of Elizabeth, when other laws were made, and executed with severity. A preacher before the queen, adverting to the increase of witches, expressed a hope that the penalties might be rigidly enforced:

‘May it please your grace to understand that witches and sorcerers within these few years are marvellously increased within your grace’s realm. Your grace’s subjects pine away even unto the death; their color fadeth, their flesh rotteth, their speech is benumbed, their senses are bereft; . . . I pray God they never practice further than upon the subject.’

It must have made the teeth chatter with fright to hear the ministers assert:

‘That they have had in their parish at one instant, XVII or XVIII witches; meaning such as could worke miracles supernaturallie; . . . that instructed by the devil, they make ointments of the bowels and members of children, whereby they ride in the aire, and accomplish all their desires. When a child is not baptized, or defended by the sign of the cross, then the witches catch them from their mothers sides in the night . . . kill them . . . or after buriall steale them out of their graves, and seeth them in a caldron, untill their flesh be made potable. . . . It is an infallible rule, that everie fortnight, or at the least everie moneth, each witch must kill one child at the least for hir part.’

With signal success, the witch-finders pricked their victims all over to discover the insensible spot, threw them into the water to ascertain whether they would sink or swim, or deprived them of sleep during successive nights to compel confession. Under a milder judiciary than on the Continent, witches who had not destroyed others by their incantations, were, for the first conviction, punished only by the pillory and imprisonment, while those condemned to die, perished by the gallows instead of the stake. The cast of thought engendered by the Reformation is strikingly typified in Luther. Oppressed by a keen sense of unworthiness, distracted by intellectual doubt, Satan was the dominating conception of his life, the efficient cause in every critical event, in every mental perturbation. In the seclusion of his monastery at Wittenberg, he constantly heard the Devil making a noise in the cloisters, even cracking nuts on his bed-post. A stain on the wall of his chamber still marks the place where he flung an ink-bottle at the Devil. He became so accustomed to the presence that, awakened on one occasion by the sound, he perceived it to be *only* the Devil, and accordingly went to sleep. ‘Oh, what horrible spectres and figures I used to see!’ None of the infirmities to which he was liable were natural; but his ear-ache was peculiarly diabolical. Physicians who attempted to explain disease by natural causes, were ignorant men, who did not know all the power of Satan. Indeed suicides, commonly supposed to have destroyed themselves, had in reality been seized and strangled by the Devil. In strict accordance with the spirit of his age, he emphatically proclaimed the duty of burning the witches. ‘I would have no compassion on these witches,’ he exclaimed. ‘I would burn them all!’ The immense majority of the accused were women—a fact explained not by their nervous sensibility

and their consequent liability to religious epidemics, but by their inherent wickedness. As long as celibacy was esteemed the highest of virtues, divines exhausted all the resources of their eloquence in describing the iniquity of the fair. By a natural process, all the 'phenomena of love' came to be regarded as most especially under the influence of the Devil. The tragedy of *Macbeth* faithfully reflects the popular superstition touching the powers of darkness. The air is lurid and thick with things weird and fantastic. Three witches meet in dark communion — kinless — nameless — and fitly consult:

First W. When shall we three meet again
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

Second W. When the hurlyburly's done,
When the battle's lost and won.

Third W. That will be ere set of sun.

First W. Where the place?

Second W. Upon the heath;

Third W. There to meet with Macbeth.'

With wild utterance, all, of the moral confusion and murkiness of their demon's heart, they vanish:

'Fair is foul, and foul is fair:
Hover through the fog and filthy air.'

Meeting again on the blasted heath, they recount to each other their exploits:

First W. Where hast thou been, sister?

Second W. Killing swine.

Third W. Sister, where thou?

First W. A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,
And mounch'd, and mounch'd, and mounch'd:—
"Give me," quoth I:
"Aroint thee, witch!" the rump-fed ronyon cries.
Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' the Tiger:
But in a sieve I'll thither sail,
And, like a rat without a tail,
I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.

Second W. I'll give thee a wind.

First W. Thou art kind.

Third W. And I another.

First W. I myself have all the other,
And the very ports they blow,
All the quarters that they know
I' the shipman's card.
I'll drain him dry as hay:
Sleep shall neither night nor day
Hang upon his pent-house lid;
He shall live a man forbid:
Weary sev'n-nights, nine times nine,
Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine:
Though his bark cannot be lost,

Yet it shall be tempest-tost.

Look what I have.—

Second W. Show me, show me.—

First W. Here I have a pilot's thumb,
Wreck'd as homeward he did come.'

Distant and complex objects are rendered distorted and portentous in the morning mists which the rising sun has not yet dispelled.

The Renaissance.—In the moral, as in the physical world, every night brightens into a new day. Ages of sloth are succeeded by periods of energy. First the seed in the soil, then the harvest—in endless recurrence. Nature may sleep, but she will wake again—forever. It is with man as with the planet,—change is identified with existence, never by leaps, ever by steps; revolutionary, periodic; pulsating to the rhythmic law of the universe, that swings to and fro through the immeasurable agitations, like the shuttle of a loom, and weaves a definite and comprehensible pattern into the otherwise chaotic fabric of things. What the Reformation exhibits in the sphere of religion and politics, the Revival of Letters displays in the sphere of culture, art, and science,—the recovered energy and freedom of humanity. Both are effects or phases, each by reaction a stimulant and a cause; the first ethical, the second intellectual; the one Christian, the other classical—in contrasted language, pagan; either, the acme of a gradual and instinctive process of *becoming*; neither, as we have seen, without many anticipations and foreshadowings. The *Renaissance*, however, is commonly understood to be the renovation of the intellect only—that outburst of human intelligence which, abroad in the fifteenth century and at home in the sixteenth, marks an epoch in human growth. What was it in its elements and its origin?—An expansion of natural existence, and a zeal for the civilizations of Greece and Rome, that till the fulness of time had lain essentially inoperative on the Dead-Sea shore of the middle-age. It was the resuscitation of the taste, the eloquence, and the song of antiquity; of the gods and heroes of Olympus, of the eternal art and thought of Athens. It was, after a long oblivion, the reappearance, with others high and luminous, of the 'divine Plato,' who alone among books is entitled to Omar's fanatical compliment to the Koran,—'Burn the libraries, for their value is in this volume.' All who went before

were his teachers; all who came after were his debtors. Every thinker of grand proportions is *his*.¹ Whoever has given a spiritual expression to truth, has voiced him. Whoever has had vision of the realities of being, has stood in his hallowed light—the Elizabethans not less. But for the magnitude of his proper genius, Shakespeare would be the most eminent of Platonists. Would you understand the lofty insight, the celestial ardor of the *Fairy Queen*—first great ideal poem in the English tongue, you must reascend to the serene solitudes of Plato, and watch the lightnings of his imagination playing in the illimitable. His sentences are the corner-stone of speculative schools, the fountain-head of literatures, the culture of nations. ‘To his doctrines we may hardly allude—the acutest German, the fondest disciple, is at fault.’ What renders him immortally noble, and irresistibly attractive to the noble, is his moral aim, his sympathy with truth—truth arrayed in the unsullied white of heaven. The admirable earnest is the central sun:

‘I, therefore, Callicles, am persuaded by these accounts, and consider how I may exhibit my soul before the judge in a healthy condition. Wherefore disregarding the honors that most men value, and looking to the truth, I shall endeavor in reality to live as virtuously as I can; and, when I die, to die so. And I invite all other men, to the utmost of my power.’

Upon this dogma let the pillared firmament rest:

‘Let us declare the cause which led the Supreme Ordainer to produce and compose the universe. He was good; and he who is good has no kind of envy. Exempt from envy, he wished that all things should be as much as possible like himself. Whosoever, taught by wise men, shall admit this as the prime cause of the origin and foundation of the world, will be in the truth.’

And human faith cleave to this, and by it interpret the world:

‘All things are for the sake of the good, and it is the cause of everything beautiful.’

Impute no ill to the eternal Radiance, however dark the problem of human destiny:

‘That which is good is beneficial; is the cause of good. And, therefore, that which is good is not the cause of *all* which is and happens, but only of that which is as it should be. . . The good things we ascribe to God, whilst we must seek elsewhere, and not in him, the causes of evil things.’

Towards this superlative perfection, the holy, the beautiful, the true, let reason lift itself:

‘Marvellous beauty! eternal, uncreated, imperishable beauty, free from increase and diminution. . . beauty which has nothing sensible, nothing corporeal, as hands or face: which does not reside in any being different from itself, in the earth, or the

¹Aristotle was his pupil, and the critic of his system.

heavens, or in any other thing, but which exists *eternally and absolutely in itself, and by itself*; beauty of which every other beauty partakes, without their birth or destruction bringing to it the least increase or diminution.'

Alas! when we would rise, we feel the weight of clay. Our life is double:

'The Deity himself *formed the divine*, and he delivered over to his celestial offspring the task of *forming the mortal*. These subordinate deities, copying the example of their parent, and receiving from his hands the *immortal principle* of the human soul, fashioned subsequently to this the mortal body, which they consigned to the soul as a vehicle, and in which they placed another kind of soul, mortal, the seat of violent and fatal affections.'

All the longing, all the vanity, all the doubt, the sorrow, the travail, of the world, this man felt; and said—what we are only now beginning to discover—that the soul had two motive powers. Two winged steeds, he calls them, one princely, the other plebeian; and a charioteer Reason, who endeavors to guide them to the realized vision of the ideal:

'Now the winged horses, and the charioteer of the gods are all of them noble, and of noble breed, while ours are mixed; and we have a charioteer who drives them in a pair, and one of them is noble and of noble origin, and the other is ignoble and of ignoble origin; and, as might be expected, there is a great deal of trouble in managing them. . . . The wing is intended to soar aloft and carry that which gravitates downwards into the upper region, which is the dwelling of the gods; and this is that element of the body which is most akin to the divine. Now the divine is beauty, wisdom, and goodness and the like; and by these the wing of the soul is nourished, and grows apace; but when fed upon evil and foulness, and the like, wastes and falls away. Zeus, the mighty lord holding the reins of a winged chariot, leads the way in heaven, ordering all and caring for all; and there follows him the heavenly array of gods and demigods, divided into eleven bands; for only Hestia is left at home in the house of heaven; but the rest of the twelve greater deities march in their appointed order. And they see in the interior of heaven many blessed sights; and there are ways to and fro, along which the happy gods are passing, each one fulfilling his own work; and any one may follow who pleases, for jealousy has no place in the heavenly choir. This is within the heaven. But when they go to feast and festival, then they move right up the steep ascent, and mount the top of the dome of heaven. Now the chariots of the gods, self-balanced, upward glide in obedience to the rein; but the others have a difficulty, for the steed who has evil in him, if he has not been properly trained by the charioteer, gravitates and inclines and sinks towards the earth: and this is the hour of agony and extremest conflict of the soul. . . . That which follows God best and is likeliest to him lifts the head of the charioteer into the outer world and is carried round in the revolution, troubled indeed by the steeds, and beholding true being, but hardly; another rises and falls, and sees, and again fails to see by reason of the unruliness of the steeds. The rest of the souls are also longing after the upper world and they all follow, but not being strong enough they sink into the gulf as they are carried round, plunging, treading on one another, striving to be first; and there is confusion and the extremity of effort, and many of them are lamed or have their wings broken by the ill driving of the charioteers; and all of them after a fruitless toil go away without being initiated into the mysteries of being, and are nursed with the food of opinion. *The reason of their great desire to behold the plain of truth is that the food which is suited to the highest part of the soul comes out of that meadow; and the wing on which the soul soars is nourished with this.*'

No wonder Platonism is immortal—immortal because its vitality is not that of one or another blood but of human nature.

But the recovered consciousness of Europe—signalized and quickened by the admiration for the antique—was especially marked by a general efflorescence of the beautiful. Among the Greeks, the central conception of art was the glory of the human body. As their mythology passed gradually into the realm of poetry, statues that once were objects of earnest prayer came to be viewed with the glance of the artist or the critic. Reverence was displaced by allegory and imagination; worship of the object, by the worship of form. It was Greece, arisen from the tomb, that in this unique era of human intelligence bequeathed those almost passionate models which have been the wonder and the delight of all succeeding ages. Man, long enveloped in a cowl, awoke to beauty. Painting and sculpture, from being a frigid reproduction of entranced eyes and sunken chests, became instinct with strong and happy life. The attenuated Christ was transformed into 'a crucified Jupiter,' the pale Virgin into a lovely girl, the dried-up saint into a ready athlete. Similar was the transition in architecture. The Gothic style, whose sombre and solemn images had awed barbarian energies to rest, was supplanted by the classic, more gorgeous, gay, and fair, fashioned from the temples of antiquity, and aspiring to an excellence purely æsthetic. With the erection of St. Peter's, the age of cathedrals was passed.

Luxurious Italy, as previously observed, led the way. The fourteenth century was her period of high and original invention—the age of the sombre Dante, the passionate Petrarch, and the joyous Boccaccio. The fifteenth was the age of rapturous devotion to classic antiquity, when the merchant bartered his rich freights for a few worm-eaten folios, and the gift of manuscripts healed the dissensions of rival states; an age as remarkable for the dispersion of learning as the other had been for the concentration of talent. The sixteenth was the exhilarating Augustan age of the Italian muse, when she had regained her freedom in the court of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and was pouring forth in spontaneous plenty everything brilliant, or fragrant, or nourishing; the age of the mighty Angelo—of the social Ariosto, whose stanzas were sung in the streets and fields—of the solitary Tasso,

whose *Jerusalem*, broken up into ballads and sung by the gondoliers in Venice, made the air vocal on a tranquil summer evening. It was also, as well as the preceding, an age of adolescence, when men were, and dared to be, *themselves* for good or for evil. There was no limit to the development of personality. In the midst of all the forms of loveliness was an unbridled laxity in literature and morals. 'We must enjoy,' sang Lorenzo: 'there is no certainty of to-morrow.' Fair Florence, in Carnival, rung to the thoughtless refrain of 'Naught ye know about to-morrow':

'Midas treads a wearier measure:
All he touches turns to gold:
If there be no taste of pleasure,
What's the use of wealth untold? . . .

Listen well to what we're saying;
Of to-morrow have no care!
Young and old together playing
Boys and girls be blithe as air!
Every sorry thought forswear!
Keep perpetual holiday.—
Youths and maids, enjoy to-day;
Naught ye know about to-morrow.'

'Some people,' said Pulci, glancing towards the dark Beyond, 'think they will there discover fig-peckers, plucked ortolans, excellent wine, good beds, and therefore they follow the monks, walking behind them. As for us, dear friend, we shall go into the black valley, where we shall hear no more alleluias.' Side by side with the infatuation for harmony and grace, flourished the passion for pleasure and voluptuousness; and the reproach even of indecency lies heavily, in all the nakedness of detail, upon most of the Italian novelists. To the poets, love furnishes the animating impulse; and amid the clouds of amorous incense we rarely discern, with a few honorable exceptions, an ennobling sentiment or a moral purpose. A mistress frowns, and the Florentine lover cries:

'Fire, fire! Ho, water! for my heart's afire!
Ho, neighbors! help me, or by God I die!
See, with his standard, that great lord, Desire!
He sets my heart aflame: in vain I cry.
Too late, alas! The flames mount high and higher.
Alack, good friends! I faint, I fail, I die.
Ho! water, neighbors mine! no more delay!
My heart's a cinder if you do but stay.'

He is not elevated,—inflated only and conventional. He desires to give play to his imagination, and to please his facile fair one

with the fluency of his vows. You may see it in the levity of his love declarations:

‘Wherefore, O lady, break the ice at length;
Make, thou, too, trial of love’s fruits and flowers:
When in thine arms thou feelst thy lover’s strength,
Thou wilt repent of all these wasted hours:
Husbands, they know not love, its breadth and length,
Seeing their hearts are not on fire like ours:
Things longed for give most pleasure; this I tell thee;
If still thou doubttest let the proof compel thee.’

You may see it, best of all, in his fifteenth century code:

‘Honor, pure love, and perfect gentleness,
Weighed in the scales of equity refined,
Are but one thing; beauty is naught or less,
Placed in a dame of proud and scornful mind. . . .
I ask no pardon if I follow Love;
Since every gentle heart is thrall thereof.

Let him rebuke me whose hard heart of stone
Ne’er felt of Love the summer in his vein!
I pray to Love that who hath never known
Love’s power may ne’er be blessed with Love’s great gain;
But he who serves our lord with might and main
May dwell forever in the fire of Love!’

Three paganisms are thus imported from the South to contribute to the taste of the North,—Greek, Latin and Italian, the last circulating fresh sap through the other two. Between the ancient world and the modern stands the genius of Italy as interpreter. England, when most strenuous in severing her spiritual relations, cultivates most closely her intellectual. The new knowledge came like a fertilizing flood upon the ‘island of the silver sea.’ Dean Colet from his Greek studies at Florence returned with the key to unlock the New Testament, and to discover a rational and practical religion in the Gospels themselves. ‘I have given up my whole soul to Greek learning,’ says the young Erasmus, with chivalrous enthusiasm; ‘and as soon as I get any money, I shall buy Greek books, and then I shall buy some clothes.’ Formerly Italian scholars had been employed to compose the public orations, but now he could write: ‘I have found in Oxford so much polish and learning that now I hardly care about going to Italy at all, save for the sake of having been there. When I listen to my friend Colet, it seems like listening to Plato himself.’ Colet, beginning the work of educational reform, established a public school, in which the scholastic logic was displaced, the steady diffusion of the classics enjoined, and

the old methods abolished. The spirit of the founder might be seen in the image of the child Jesus over the gate, with the words graven beneath it, 'Hear ye Him.' 'Lift up your little white hands for me,' he wrote, 'which prayeth for you to God.' Vain was the cry of alarm. 'No wonder,' wrote More to the dean, 'your school raises a storm, for it is like the wooden horse in which armed Greeks were hidden for the ruin of barbarous Troy.' The example bred a crowd of imitators. More grammar schools were founded in the later years of Henry than in three hundred years before. Higher education passed from death to life. Of Cambridge, Erasmus, invited there as a teacher of Greek, says:

'Scarcely thirty years ago nothing was taught here but the *Parva Logicialia* of Alexander, antiquated exercises from Aristotle, and the *Questiones* of Scotus. As time went on better studies were added—mathematics, a new, or at any rate a renovated, Aristotle, and a knowledge of Greek literature. What has been the result? The university is now so flourishing that it can compete with the best university of the age.'

At Oxford, the fierceness of the opposition evinces the strength of the revival. The contest took the form of hostile division into Greeks and Trojans—the former the advocates of the New Learning, the latter its opponents. But even here the battle was soon over. 'The students,' said an eye-witness, 'rush to the Greek letters; they endure watching, fasting, toil, and hunger, in the pursuit of them.' The movement, however, suddenly received a temporary check. The impulse given by the reformers was primarily incidental, for to them the Greek Testament was the armory from which they drew their weapons of defence and of assault; while the immediate effects of the Reformation, both by revolutionizing the ecclesiastical system and by withdrawing academic abilities into the abyss of controversy, were depressing. Latimer calculated that the number of students at the two universities was fewer by ten thousand after the alienation of abbey and church lands had left no mercenary attractions in the sacred offices. Religion lost some of its charms when the golden prospect was gone. About the same time (1550), an observer says curiously:

'Formerly there were in houses belonging to the University of Cambridge, two hundred students of divinity, many very well learned, which be now all clean gone home; and many young toward scholars, and old fatherly doctors, not one of them left. One hundred also, of another sort, that, having rich friends, or being beneficed men, did live of themselves in hotels and inns, be either gone away or else fain to

creep into colleges and put poor men from bare livings. These both be all gone, and a small number of poor, godly, diligent students, now remaining only in colleges, be not able to tarry and continue their studies for lack of exhibition and help.'

Of the poorer and more diligent students he adds the interesting picture:

'There be divers there which rise daily about four or five of the clock in the morning, and from five till six of the clock use common prayer, with an exhortation of God's word in a common chapel; and from six until ten of the clock use ever either private study or common lectures. At ten of the clock they go to dinner, whereas they be content with a penny piece of beef among four, having a few pottage made of the broth of the same beef, with salt and oatmeal, and nothing else. After this slender diet, they be either teaching or learning until five of the clock in the evening; whereas they have a supper not much better than their dinner. Immediately after which they go either to reasoning in problems, or to some other study, until it be nine or ten of the clock; and then, being without fires, are fain to walk or run up and down half an hour, to get a heat on their feet when they go to bed.'

In the adverse reign of Mary, Trinity College was endowed, more especially for the cultivation of classical scholarship. Its founder states in a letter:

'My Lord Cardinal's Grace has had the overseeing of my statutes. He much likes well that I have therein ordered the Latin tongue to be read to my scholars. But he advises me to order the Greek to be more taught there than I have provided. This purpose I well like; but I fear the times will not bear it now. I remember when I was a young scholar at Eton, the Greek tongue was growing apace; the study of which is now alate much decayed.'

The languishing culture revived towards the close of Elizabeth's reign, when the 'times' were far more propitious. Insensibly, through the shocks and convulsions of opinion, the influences of the Renaissance had been enriching the soil for the harvest. When the first fanaticisms of misguided zealots had subsided, the interest in letters recovered and spread with unwonted vigor. The tone of the universities wholly changed. Scholars like Hooker could now be found in the ranks of the priesthood—against whom it had been a common note in the official visitations, 'He knows a few Latin words, but no sentences.' The Court was distinguished for its elegance. Maids of honor were readers of Plato. The Queen could quote Pindar and Homer in the original, and read every morning a portion of Demosthenes. It was preëminently the age of learned ladies. Says Harrison:

'Truly it is a rare thing with us now to hear of a courtier which hath but his own language. And to say how many gentlewomen and ladies there are that, besides sound knowledge of the Greek and Latin tongues, are thereto no less skilful in Spanish, Italian, and French, or in some one of them, it resteth not in me.'

The abundance of printers and of printed books is evidence that the world of readers and writers had widened much beyond the

circle of courtiers and of prelates. Yet the light that shone remarkably upon the heights, was by no means generally dispersed. Many of the rank were illiterate, the majority of the middle-class were uneducated, while the lower orders were in comparative darkness. As late as Edward VI there were peers of Parliament unable to read. It is a question whether Shakespeare's father, an alderman of Stratford, could write his name. The educative theory was based upon the principle that varieties of inapplicable knowledge might be good where accessible, but were not essential. Two things were indispensable,—ability to labor and skill in arms. Every boy between seven and seventeen was required to be provided with a long-bow and two arrows; and every Englishman older, to provide himself with a bow and four arrows. It was the spirit of this law which Ascham, the schoolmaster of the period, is enforcing when he says of his own tutor:

'This worshipful man hath ever loved, and used to have many children brought up in learning in his house, amonges whom I myself was one, for whom at term times he would bring down from London both bow and shafts. And when they should play he would go with them himself into the field, see them shoot, and he that shot the fairest should have the best bow and shafts, and he that shot ill-favoredly should be mocked of his fellows till he shot better. Would to God all England had used or would use to lay the foundation of youth after the example of this worshipful man in bringing up children in the Book and the Bow; by which two things the whole commonwealth both in peace and war is chiefly valid and defended withal.'

Latimer, preaching before the king in 1549, draws the portrait of a yeoman:

'In my time my poor father was as diligent to teach me to shoot as to learn me any other thing; and so, I think, other men did their children. He taught me how to draw, how to lay my body in my bow, and not to draw with strength of arms, as other nations do, but with strength of the body. I had my bows bought me according to my age and strength; as I increased in them, so my bows were made bigger and bigger; for men shall never shoot well except they be brought up in it. It is a goodly art, a wholesome kind of exercise, and much commended in physic.'

But what is more to our present purpose is, that the true significance of the Renaissance consists, not in any accidental emigration of Greek scholars and importation of ancient manuscripts from Constantinople, nor chiefly in the passion for classical lore, but in that general ferment which produced, on the whole, marked effects upon all classes,—in that new life by which every province of human intelligence and action was refreshed. A far higher development, indeed, than the Greek or Latin mania, sprang from the nearer and more seductive paganism of Italy,

partly through travel, partly through her poetry and romance. A land of tropical gardens and splendid skies, of public pageants and secret tragedies, of brilliant fancies and gorgeous contrasts, she fascinated the Northern imagination with a strange wild glamour. 'An Italianate Englishman,' ran the Italian proverb, 'is an incarnate devil.' Our ancestral youth who repair to her for polish and inspiration or in quest of fanciful adventure, are warned of her alluring charms:

'And being now in Italy, that great limbique of working braines, he must be very circumspect in his carriage, for she is able to turne a Saint into a devil, and deprave the best natures, if one will abandon himselfe, and become a prey to dissolute courses and wantonnesse.'

Ascham writes with the alarm and severity of a rigorist:

'These bee the inchantementes of Circes, brought out of Italie to marre mens maners in England; much, by example of ill life, but more by preceptes of fonde bookes, of late translated out of Italian into English, sold in every shop in London. . . . There bee moe of these nngratious bookes set out in Printe wythin these fewe monethes, than have been sene in England many score yeares before. . . . Than they have in more reverence the triumphes of Petrarche: than the Genesis of Moses: They make more account of Tullies offices, than S. Paules epistles: of a tale in Bocace than a storie of the Bible.'

If the breath of the South was tainted, it was spirit-stirring; and the healthier constitution which inhaled it, purged off much of its mischief, while it assimilated the beneficial. The contemplative vein of the Briton was quickened by the brilliancy of the Italian. That which in the first became a superb corporeality, became in the second a vehement and unconventional spirituality. The debt of English to Italian literature consists,—in material of production—the impulse towards creation—a keener sense of the tragic—a livelier sense of the beautiful—a more copious diction—and a more finished style.

Language.—Of the monstrous anomalies of the current or colloquial speech, the following note from the Duchess of Norfolk to Cromwell is a curious instance:

'My ffary gode lord—her I sand you in tokyn hoff the neweyer a glasse hoff Setyl set in Sellfer gyld I pra you tak hit (in) wort An hy wer habel het showlde be bater I woll hit war wort a m crone.'

So unsettled was our orthography still, that writers, each in his peculiar mode of spelling, did not write the same words uniformly. Elizabeth, the royal mistress of eight languages, wrote *sovereign* seven different ways, while the name of *Villers*, in the

deeds of that family, has fourteen different forms. *Shakespeare* is found in the manuscripts of the period spelled in any manner that may express the sound or the semblance of it. Many of the learned engaged in the ambitious reform of teaching the nation how to spell and pronounce. But the pronunciation was so discordant in different shires, that the orthoepists are quite irreconcilable with each other or with themselves. Some may amuse. One would turn the language into a music-book. He says:

‘In true orthographie, both the *eye*, the *voice*, and the *ear* must consent perfectly, without any let, doubt, or maze.’

Another affords a quaint definition of *orthoepy* combined with *orthography*:

‘Orthographie, conteyning the due order and reason howe to write or painte thimage of manne’s voice, moste like to the life or nature.’

While Shakespeare sarcastically describes the whole race of philologists: ‘Now he is turned *orthographer*, his words are a very fantastical banquet; just so many strange dishes.’ The English Bible had been the strong breakwater against the tides of novelty and the vicissitudes of time; and Tyndale’s New Testament, executed in the traditional sacred dialect of Wycliffe, did more to fashion and fix our tongue than any other native work from Chaucer to Shakespeare. The Lord’s Prayer illustrates well its force and purity of expression:

‘Our Father, which arte in heven, halowed be thy name. Let thy kingdom come. Thy wyll be fulfilled, as well in erth as hit ys in heven. Geve vs this daye oure dayly breade, and forgeve vs oure treaspases, even as we forgeve them, which treaspas vs. Leede vs not into temptacion, but delyvre vs from yvell. Amen.’

In 1575, standard English had so progressed in simplicity and power, that Sidney could say, to his honor:

‘English is void of those cumbersome differences of cases, genders, moods, and tenses, which I think was a piece of the Tower of Babylon’s curse, that a man should be put to schoole to learn his mother tongue; but for the uttering sweetly and properly the conceit of the minde, which is the ende of speech, that it hath equally with any other tongue in the world.’

Travel and commerce, enlarging with the rapid progress of geographical discovery, made numerous and important accessions to the vocabulary. New wares were introduced, new stores of natural knowledge flowed in from regions hitherto unknown. For a single instance of the many terms which thus rose above the horizon, seldom more grateful if less material, *potato*¹ now

¹ From the Indian *batata*.

made its first appearance in Europe, imported from America. Of this esculent tuber, a voyager makes the following mention:

‘*Openark* are a kinde of roots of round forme, some farre greater, which are found in moist and marish groundes, growing many together, one by another in ropes, as though they were fastened by a string. Being boiled or sodden, they are very good meat.’

A more prolific origin of new words than the taste for sea roving was the intense thirst after religious discussion. The Reformation enriched our theological dialect by the translation of many moral and religious works from the Latin; and the very general study of theology rendered this dialect more familiar than that of any other branch of letters. Latin, moreover, was the great link between our Reformers and those of the Continent, and the new ideas taking root, brought in shoals of new terms. Finally, the versions of classical authors, after the brief reaction against classical learning, were an inexhaustible mine of linguistic wealth; and the ‘far-journeyed gentlemen’ returned not only in love with foreign fashions, but equally fond ‘to powder their talk with over-sea language.’ The influx of foreign neologisms alarmed the purists, who always deem that English corrupt which recedes from its Saxon character. Says Wilson in 1550:

‘Some seke so farre for outlandishe Englishe, that thei forgette altogether their mothers’ language, . . . He that commeth lately out of France, will talke Frenche-English, and never blush at the matter. The unlearned or foolishe phantasticall that the simple cannot but wonder at their talke and thinke surely thei speake by some revelation. I know them that thinke Rhetorique to stand whollie upon darke woordes, and he that can catche an ynke horne terme by the taile, hym thei coumpt to be a fine Englishman and a good Rhetorician.’

Notwithstanding, in 1583 Mulcaster wrote: ‘The English tung cannot prove fairer than it is at this day.’ Querulous critic and rash soothsayer! The one did not reflect that an expansion of thought compels an expansion of its garniture, and could not know that even Chaucer’s ‘well of English undefiled’ was a well in which were deposited many waters; while the other could not foresee the luxuriant productiveness, the powerful stimulus, of the next thirty years. A single example may suggest something of that variety and affluence by which the speech, once so rude and impotent, was being made ready for the enlarged and diversified conceptions of the great masters: *wrath* and *ire*¹ came over with Hengist; the Danes brought *anger*; the French supplied

¹ From Saxon *yrre*.

rage and *'fury*; the Latin *indignation*; the Greek *choler*; and we now, it may be added, confer this sense on *passion*. As a final illustration of the state of English orthography in its process of evolution, we extract the following from the address of Brutus to the people in the drama of *Julius Cæsar*, written in or before 1601, and printed in 1623:

'I have done no more to *Cæsar* than you shall do to *Brutus*. The Question of his death, is iuroll'd in the Capitol: his Glory not extenuated, wherein he was worthy; nor his offences enforc'd, for which he suffered death.

Heere comes his Body, mourned by *Marke Antony*, who though he had no hand in his death, shall receive the benefit of his dying, a place in the Commonwealth, as which of you shall not. With this I depart, that as I slewe my best Louer for the good of Rome, I haue the same Dagger for my selfe, when it shall please my Country to need my death.

All. Liue *Brutus*, liue, liue.

1. Bring him with Triumph home vnto his house.

2. Giue him a Statue with his Ancestors.

3. Let him be *Cæsar*.

4. *Cæsars* better parts

Shall be Crown'd in *Brutus*.

1. Wee'l bring him to his Housse, with Showts and Clamors.

Bru. My Country-men.

2. Peace, silence, *Brutus* speakes

1. Peace ho.

Bru. Good Countrymen, let me depart alone,

And (for my sake) stay heere with *Antony*:

Do grace to *Cæsars* Corpes, and grace his Speech

Tending to *Cæsars* Glories, which *Marke Antony*

(By our permission) is allow'd to make.

I do intreat you not a man depart,

Saue I alone, till *Antony* have spoke.'

Here our survey is approximately complete. We have arrived at the stage where new capabilities are no longer imperiously demanded by the advancement of culture. The nursling has become a child, the child a man,—still, with proper training, to acquire additional flexibility and strength, yet to remain substantially the same. The closing century that witnessed the vast and varied revelation of man's moral nature, witnessed also the end of that organic action by which the English language was developed from its elements and constitutionally fixed, unfettered and many-voiced. Your daughter, O Thor and Odin, has indeed lost the likeness of her mother, but,—

'Not from one metal alone the perfectest mirror is shapen,
Not from one color is built the rainbow's aerial bridge:
Instruments blending together yield the divinest of music,
Out of myriad of flowers sweetest of honey is drawn.'¹

¹ W. W. Story.

Poetry.—Do but consider the life of man, that we are as a shadow and our days as a post, then think whether it were good to disinter the lifeless versifiers who fill up the spaces around and between the noticeable elevations of this age, with scarce a soul to a hundred, and of interest to poetical antiquarians only. Chaucer, it has been seen, left nothing to resemble him. Gower is a feeble spring, obstructed by scholastic rubbish. Occleve and Lydgate are as dead sea-moss on a barren shore. The Scotch poets, with more energy, are yet nebulae, which no telescope could resolve into individual stars. Where they mean to be serious, they are tedious; and where lofty, pedantic. Their compositions, with scattering remembrances of beauty or occasional throbs of true vitality, have the same vices of unreality and allegory which were the fashion of the day. Verse that makes us foreigners is no poetry.

One writer alone, in its early years, displays, like a feudal premonition, the two great destined features of the sixteenth century,—hatred of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, which is the Reformation; and the realism of the senses, which is the Renaissance. His rhyme,—

‘Tattered and jagged,
Rudely rain-beaten,
Rusty, moth-eaten,’

full of English and popular instincts, is a sort of literary mud with which he bespatters those who retain the privileges of saints:

‘Thus I, Colin Clout,
As I go about,
And wondering as I walk,
I hear the people talk:
Men say for silver and gold
Mitres are bought and sold:
A straw for Goddys curse,
What are they the worse?
What care the clergy though Gill sweat,
Or Jack of the Noke?
The poor people they yoke
With sumners and citacions,
And excommunications.
About churches and markets
The bishop on his carpets
At home soft doth sit.
This is a fearful fit,
To hear the people jangle.

How wearily they wrangle!
Doctor Daupatus
And Bachelor Bacheleratus,
Drunken as a mouse
At the ale-house,
Taketh his pillion and his cap
At the good ale-tap
For lack of good wine.
As wise as Robin Swine,
Under a notary’s sign,
Was made a divine;
As wise as Waltham’s calf,
Must preach in Goddys half;
In the pulpit solemnly;
More meet in a pillory;
For by St. Hilary
He can nothing smatter
Of logic nor school matter.’

With almost brutal coarseness alternate gleams of the sprightly fancy. Called upon to praise the ladies of the court, he can give a portrait of the outside, clear, pretty, and full of detail. He compares one to —

‘The fragrant camomile,
The ruddy rosary,
The sovereign rosemary

The pretty strawberry,
The columbine, the nepte,
The gillyflower well set,
The proper violet.’

And adds:

‘Your color
Is like the daisy flower
After an April shower,

Star of the morrow grey,
The blossom of the spring,
The freshest flower of May.’

By his hilarity and freedom only, does **Skelton** exhibit the new spirit. Rooted in the soil, he grovels there, with no aspiring instinct towards diviner air.

A brighter light in this rising dawn gives clearer promise of refulgent day. For **Howard**, Earl of Surrey, it was reserved to mark a transformation of the intellect,—to introduce a new and manly style, and to teach the English muse accents she had never tried before. Says Puttenham:

‘In the latter end of the same king (Henry the eight) reigne, sprong up a new company of courtly makers, of whom Sir Thomas Wyat th’ elder and Henry Earle of Surrey were the two chieftaines, who having travailed into Italie, and there tasted the sweete and stately measures and stile of the Italian Poesie, as novices newly crept out of the schooles of Dante, Arioste, and Petrarch, they greatly polished our rude and homely maner of vulgar Poesie, from that it had bene before, and for that cause may justly be sayd the first reformers of our English meetre and stile.’

The life of Surrey was a chivalric romance. An earl, a relative of the king, a satellite of the Court, brilliant in arms, magnificent, sumptuous, ambitious, four times imprisoned, then beheaded at twenty-seven; like Dante and Petrarch, a plaintive and platonic lover. More than all, his mystical love for the fair Geraldine, like Dante’s for Beatrice and Petrarch’s for Laura, invests his memory with a peculiar charm. She too is a child, seen only to be idealized; one of nature’s sweet creatures that, like chastened colors, have always a holy reference beyond themselves; whose image, entering the poet-soul, is straightway enthroned in a region sublime, to shine as a light, a consolation, a hope, in a dark and troubled world. With the polish and disposition of his Italian model, he says of this being of the heart and mind:

'I could rehearse, if that I would,
The whole effect of Nature's plaint,
When she had lost the perfect mould,
The like to whom she could not paint:
With wringing hands, how she did cry,
And what she said, I know it, I.

I know she swore with raging mind,
Her kingdom only set apart,
There was no loss by law of kind
That could have gone so near her heart;
And this was chiefly all her pain;
She could not make the like again.'

The sad and sombre tint, seldom lacking in this race, is here, even in youth. Alone, a prisoner in Windsor, banishing the less by remembrance of a greater grief, he recalls with pathetic modulation, the joys and faces of the vanished days:

'With each sweet place returns a taste full sour,
The large green courts, where we were wont to hove, [hover
With eyes cast up into the maiden's tower,
And easy sighs such as folk draw in love,
The stately seats, the ladies bright of hue,
The dances short, long tales of great delight;
With words and looks, that tigers could but rue;
When each of us did plead the other's right, . . .

The secret groves, which oft me made resound
Of pleasant plaint, and of our ladies' praise;
Recording oft what grace each one had found,
What hope of speed, what dread of long delays, . . .
The secret thoughts imparted with such trust;
The wanton talk, the divers change of play;
The friendship sworn, each promise kept so just,
Wherewith we passed the winter night away.
And with this thought the blood forsakes the face;
The tears berain my cheeks of deadly hue:

The which, as soon as sobbing sighs, alas!

Upsupped have, thus I my plaint renew:

"O place of bliss, renewer of my woes!

Give me account, where is my noble fere,

[companion

Whom in thy walls thou dost each night enclose,

To other lief, but unto me most dear."

[dear

Echo, alas! that doth my sorrow rue

Returns thereat a hollow sound of plaint.'

Observe the new-born art. It is calculating and selective, contrasted and ornamented, eloquent and forceful; critical, exact, musical, and balanced; uniting symmetry of phrase to symmetry of idea, and delight of the ear to delight of the mind.

But the chief point in which the pupil imitates his master is in the use of the sonnet. This 'diamond of literature,' as practiced by Petrarch, is composed of fourteen lines, divided

into two quatrains and two tercets, the quatrains repeating one pair of rhymes and the tercets another. Thus:

‘The wrinkled sire with hair like winter snow
 Leaves the beloved spot where he hath passed his years,
 Leaves wife and children, dumb with bitter tears,
 To see their father’s tottering steps and slow,
 Dragging his aged limbs with weary woe,
 In these last days of life he nothing fears,
 But with stout heart his fainting spirit cheers,
 And spent and wayworn forward still doth goe;
 Then comes to Rome, following his heart’s desire,
 To gaze upon the portraiture of Him
 Whom yet he hopes in heaven above to see:
 Thus I, alas! my seeking spirit tire,
 Lady, to find in other features dim
 The longed for, loved, true lineaments of thee.’

Surrey does not adhere to the strict Italian rule, and his most famous performance consists of three regular quatrains concluded with a couplet. Thus:





‘The soote season, that bud and blome forth brings, [sweet
 With grene hath clad the hill, and eke the vale:
 The nightingale with fethers new she sings:
 The turtle to her mate hath told her tale:
 Somer is come, for every spray now springs:
 The hart hath hong his old hed on the pale;
 The buck in brake his winter coate he flings:
 The fishes flete with new repaired scale: [swim
 The adder all her slough away she flings;
 The swift swallow pursueth the flies smale;
 The busy bee her hony now she mings: [mingles
 Winter is worne, that was the flowers bale.
 And thus I se among these pleasant things
 Eche care decays; and yet my sorrow springs.’



Besides the sonnet, Surrey borrows for English versification that decasyllable iambic rhythm—*blank verse*—in which our greatest poetical triumphs have been achieved. Almost verse for verse he translates parts of the *Æneid* into unrhymed pentameter. Thus, of the introduction of the wooden horse into Troy:

‘We cleft the walles, and closures of the towne,
 Wherto all helpe, and underset the feht
 With sliding rolles, and bound his neck with ropes.
 This fatall gin thus overclambe our walles,
 Stuft with armd men: about the which there ran
 Children and maides, that holly carolles sang. . . .
 Fowr times it stopt in thentrie of our gate,
 Fowr times the harnesse clattered in the womb.’

Surely no ignoble effort to break the bondage of rhyme. Let it not be forgotten, however:—

1. That English verse was mainly blank for the first five hundred years of its existence.

2. That the typic scheme of our old 'heroic measure' was $\frac{3}{8}$ ⁽¹⁾  ⁽²⁾    in which (1) alternated with (2) in lines of two or four bars.

3. That the modern 'heroic' differs from the ancient in having for its prevalent bar $\frac{3}{8}$   with five bars to the line.

4. That Surrey merely disused rhyme in a rhythm which was established by Chaucer a hundred and fifty years gone by; as:



Farther on, thirty years distant, beyond this budding spring which was nipped untimely, is the phenomenal **Sidney**, whose writings will exhibit the luxuriance and the irregularity of the prevailing manners and the public taste. Higher up, in that empyrean where the moral and sensuous are united, is the platonie **Spenser**, at once a pagan and a Christian, who will gather and arrange, with inimitable art, the loveliest flowers of both civilizations. About this exceptional bloom is an abundance of verse, beyond the drama, most of which is a dismal travesty upon the name of poetry. Undoubtedly, these poetasters, badly as they wrote, did not write in vain. By their very failures they helped to develop the powers of the language, and by patient labor on its sterile spots enriched the soil for such as should be born into the inheritance of 'fresh fields and pastures new.' It would be pleasant to be grateful to them for their poems,—verbose, generally stale, dull to the verge of stupidity. The titles set one yawning; as, *Five hundred Points of good Husbandry*; *A Dialogue contayning in effect the number of al the Proverbs in the English tongue, compact in a matter concerning two marriages*; *The whole Books of Psalmes collected into English metre by T. Sternhold, T. Hopkins, and others, conferred with the Ebrue, with apt Notes to sing them withall*. You will meet now and then, we dare say, with a brilliant picture, or a genuine

love-cry, or a profound truth, as in the two noble stanzas of Sternhold:

‘The Lord descended from above
And bowed the heavens high,
And underneath his feet he cast
The darkness of the sky;

On cherubs and on cherubims
Full royally he rode,
And on the wings of all the winds
Came flying all abroad.’

Or the elaborate sonnet of the amiable Daniel to the object of his baffled affection:

‘Restore thy tresses to the golden ore;
Yield Cytherea’s son those arcs of love;
Bequeath the heavens the stars that I adore;
And to the orient do thy pearls remove.
Yield thy hand’s pride unto the ivory white;
To Arabian odors give thy breathing sweet;
Restore thy blush unto Aurora bright;
To Thetis give the honor of thy feet.
Let Venus have thy graces, her resigned;
And thy sweet voice give back unto the spheres;
But yet restore thy fierce and cruel mind
To Hyrcan tigers and to ruthless bears;
Yield to the marble thy hard heart again;
So shalt thou cease to plague and I to pain.’

The grand dictum of Stoicism:

‘He that of such a height hath set his mind,
And reared the dwelling of the thoughts so strong,
As neither fear nor hope can shake the frame
Of his resolved powers: nor all the wind
Of vanity or malice pierce to wrong
His settled peace, or to disturb the same;
What a fair seat hath he from whence he may
The boundless wastes and weals of man survey!’

And the famous sentiment:

*‘Unless above himself he can
Erect himself, how poor a thing is man!’*

Or Drayton’s graceful compliment to Isabella’s hand:

‘She laid her fingers on his manly cheek,
The god’s pure sceptres and the darts of love,
That with their touch might make a tiger meek,
Or might great Atlas from his seat remove,
So white, so soft, so delicate, so sleek
As she had worn a lily for a glove.’

And his description of the virgin morning of the infant year, when brooks sing carols and glees, and birds in silvery warblings tell their panting joy:

'When Phœbus lifts his head out of the water's wave,
 No sooner doth the earth her flowery bosom brave,
 At such time as the year brings on the pleasant spring,
 But Hunt's up to the morn the feathered sylvans sing;
 And, in the lower grove as on the rising knowl,
 Upon the highest spray of every mounting pole
 These quiristers are perched, with many a speckled breast.
 Then from her burnished gate the goodly glittering East
 Gilds every mountain top, which late the humorous night
 Bespangled had with pearl, to please the morning's sight;
 On which the mirthful quires, with their clear open throats,
 Unto the joyful morn so strain their warbling notes
 That hill and valleys ring, and even the echoing air
 Seems all composed of sounds about them every where.'

But we shall no longer pause, if we know our opulence, and have learned to distinguish diamond from flint-sand, or gold from iron-glance; for be it clearly and constantly remembered, worthy art, that makes of all men a commonwealth, that is always new and incapable of growing old, must have that intensity of moral feeling or power of imagination by which noble emotions are excited, —Veneration, Love, Admiration, Joy, or their opposites—Hatred, Scorn, Horror, Grief. There were simple ballad-writers who could have given these scholars a lesson in rhetoric. For hear a lover deceived and repentant 'of the true love which he bare her':

'Where I songht heaven there founnd I hap;
 From danger unto death,
 Much like the mouse that treads the trap
 In hope to find her food,
 And bites the bread that stops her breath,—
 So in like case I stood.'

And another, 'accusing' his love for her unfaithfulness,' and proposing 'to live in liberty':

'But I am like the beaten fowl
 That from the net escaped,
 And thou art like the ravening owl
 That all the night hath waked.'

Shall we make an old lava stream white-hot by covering it with hoar-frost? With these futile efforts to kindle one's self with a painted flame, compare the wild vigor and fierce sincerity of the Scotch *Twa Corbies*:

'As I was walking all alone
 I heard twa corbies making a moan.
 The one unto the other did say
 Where shall we gang dine to-day?
 In beyond that old turf dyke
 I wot there lies a new-slain knight;

And naebody kens that he lies there
But his hawk and his hound and his lady fair.
His hound is to the hunting gone,
His hawk to fetch the wild fowl home,
His lady has ta'n another mate,
So we may make our dinner sweet.
O'er his white bones as they lie bare
The wind shall blow forevermair.'

But the chief excellence of poetry, as well as its most abundant and popular development, was dramatic. The most original product and expression of the English Renaissance is the drama. No form of art receives and preserves, like it, the exact imprint of the age and of the nation. None expresses so much, and that so deeply. None has expanded, in all its details, by gradations more insensible. None teaches more clearly that genius can not dispense with experience,—that the favored generation, and the great artists in it, flourish largely on a soil fertilized by the tentative efforts of generations which precede. Here, as in Greece and elsewhere, the drama began in religion. At a time when sermons were not intelligible if preached, and when none but the clergy could read the stories of the Christian faith, it was introduced by the Church, to instruct the illiterate in saintly or Scriptural history—the only history then known—and to extend her influence by engrossing the sources of popular recreation. Priests were the writers or inventors, and frequently the actors, of the plays, usually written in mixed prose and verse. As mysterious subjects were chosen—the lives and marvels of the saints, the Incarnation, Crucifixion, Resurrection, Creation, Fall, or Conquests of Hell—these performances acquired the general name of *Mysteries*. The 'theatre' was the cathedral, a scaffold in the open air, or a movable stage on wheels, drawn from street to street, or from town to town. As the cart stopped at given points, the actors threw open the doors, and proceeded to perform the scenes allotted them. A graduated platform in three divisions, represented Heaven, Earth, and Hell. Above, the Deity and His angels, passive when not actually mingling in the action; in the centre moved the human world, the actors standing motionless at one side when they had nothing to say or do; and the yawning throat of an immeasurable dragon, emitting smoke and flames when required, showed the entrance to the bottomless pit, into which, through the expanded jaws, the

damned were dragged with shrieks of agony by demons. Trap-doors and like mechanical contrivances were not unknown. Closed structures were palaces, cottages, temples, according to the necessities of the piece, their destination being occasionally shown by written placards. A superb paradise was the glory of the manager. Silk hangings, flowers, and fruit-bearing trees adorned this favored spot. The costumes were as rich and imposing as the vestry or the purse could compass. Horned devils in skins of beasts, with tails and cloven hoofs, formed an exception to the usual inaccuracy of theatrical attire. These were the buffoons; and the poor yokels who shed tears at the torturous crucifixion, or were appalled at the flaming wings of the infernal monster, would listen with shouts of laughter to the reciprocal abuse voided by Satan and his minions, whose very names in solitude would have paralyzed them. The customary encomium was, 'To-day the mystery was very fine and devout, and the devils played most pleasantly.' The people were in the childhood of society, satisfied that they were good Christians, and so were innocently insensible to the blasphemy or indecency of their exhibitions. It accorded with the debased ideas of the times to make such entries as: 'paid for a pair of gloves for God;' 'paid for gilding God's coat;' 'dyvers necessities for the trimmyng of the Father of Heaven;' 'payed to the players for rehearsal—to God, iis. viii*d.*; to Pilate his wife, iis.; for keeping fyer at hell's mouth, iii*d.*' The coarse humor which kept the audience awake, was not without a certain power of characterization. Thus Noah and his wife, in the *Deluge*, are close copies of contemporary life. Mrs. Noah, a shrew and a vixen, refuses to leave her gossips, swears she will not go into the Ark; scolds Noah, and is flogged; then wishes herself a widow, hopes all wives the same good luck, and thinks she but echoes their feelings in doing so; while Noah takes occasion to inform all husbands that their proper course is to break their wives after his fashion—with a stick not thicker than the thumb. At this point, the water is nearly up to her neck, and she is partly coaxed, partly forced, into the Ark by one of her sons.

A change of intellectual condition is marked by the decadence of the Mysteries after the fourteenth century. In the fifteenth, a new class of dramatic performances arose, in which

the personages were not concrete beings, but their shadowy reflections, the virtues and vices,—Pride, Gluttony, Temperance, Faith, and the like. To relieve their gravity, under which the audience were liable to yawn and sleep, the Devil was retained, and a more natural buffoon was introduced in the Vice, who acted the part of broad, rampant jester. These two were the darlings of the multitude. Full of pranks and swaggering fun, a part of Vice's ordinary business was to treat the Devil with ribald familiarity, to crack saucy jokes upon him, to bestride him and beat him till he roared, and in the end to be carried off to Hell on his back. Characteristic examples are *The Castle of Perseverance* and *Every Man*. The latter is opened in a monologue by the Messenger, who announces the subject. Then God appears, who, after some general complaints on the moral depravity of the human race, calls for Death, and orders him to bring before His tribunal Every-Man. Neither Fellowship nor Kindred nor Goods nor Riches will or can avail. Successively implored, they successively forsake the suppliant. Utterly disconsolate, Every-Man seeks Good-Deeds, and she, after upbraiding him with his long neglect of her, conducts him to her sister Knowledge, who in turn leads him to the 'holy man Confession.' Confession appoints him penance, which he inflicts upon himself, and then withdraws from the stage to receive the sacraments of the priest. On his return he waxes faint; and, as Strength, Beauty, Discretion and Five-Wits desert him, he expires, abandoned by all but Good-Deeds, who attends him to the last. An angel then descends to sing his requiem; and the epilogue is spoken by a Doctor, who, after recapitulation, delivers the moral:

'This memoriall men may have in mynde,
Ye herers, take, if of worth old and yonge,
And forsake Pryde, for he deceyveth you in thende,
And remembre Beaute, Five Wits, Strength and Discretion,
They all at last do Every Man forsake:
Save his Good Deeds there dothe he take;
But beware, for and they be small,
Before God he hath no help at all.'

This drama came from the Romanists to recall the auditors back to the shaken creed of their fathers. As the earlier plays were professedly religious or theological, so the later were semi-religious or ethical, and hence were styled *Moralities*.

A further secularization of the drama occurred when, taking a more adventurous course, it accommodated itself to the fashions and factions of the day, not yet venturing into a wide field, but peeping, as it were, from a corner. It was nothing more than a farce in a single act, satirical and comic, sustained in dialogue by three or four professional characters of the times, and acted in the intervals of a banquet. From this last circumstance, it was called the *Interlude*. Thus Douglas, the Scotch bard:

‘Grete was the preis the feast royal to sene;
At ease they eat, with *interludes* between.’

Heywood, jester of Henry VIII, was their most noted author. His *Four P’s* is a curious illustration of the wit, manners, and opinions of the period. It turns upon a dispute between a Palmer, a Pardoner, a Poticary, and a Pedlar, as to who can practice the greatest frauds on credulity and ignorance. The contest ends in a wager who shall tell the greatest lie, when the Palmer says he never saw a woman out of temper. Thereupon the others declare him ‘a liar of the first magnitude.’ Heywood’s zeal for the Roman Catholic cause does not seem to have prevented him from lashing with the utmost freedom and severity the abuses of popery. The Pardoner says:

‘I say yet again, my pardons are such,
That if there were a thousand souls on a heap,
I would bring them all to heaven as good sheep, . . .
With small cost without any pain,
These pardons bring them to heaven plain:
Give me but a penny or two-pence,
And as soon as the soul departeth hence,
In half an hour, or three quarters at the most,
The soul is in heaven with the Holy Ghost.’

Like a regular graduate in the game of imposture, he recounts the virtues of his relics, to which he and the rest hood-wink their understandings:

‘Lo, here be pardons, half a dozen,
For ghostly riches they have no cousin,
And moreover, to me they bring
Sufficient succour for my living. . . .
Friends, here shall ye see, even anon,
Of All-Hallows, the blessed jaw-bone.
Mark well this, this relic here is a whipper;
My friends unfeigned, here’s a slipper
Of one of the seven sleepers, be sure.
Here is an eye-tooth of the great Turk;
Whose eyes be once set on this piece of work,

- May happily lose part of his eye-sight,
 But not all till he be blind ontright.
 Kiss it hardly, with good devotion.
- Pot.* This kiss shall bring us much promotion:
 Fogh! by St. Saviour, I never kissed a worse. . . .
 For, by All-Hallows, yet methinketh
 That All-Hallows' breath stinketh.
- Palm.* Ye judge All-Hallows' breath unknown;
 If any breath stink, it is your own.
- Pot.* I know my own breath from All-Hallows,
 Or else it were time to kiss the gallows.
- Pard.* Nay, sirs here may ye see
 The great toe of the Trinity:
 Who to this toe any money voweth,
 And once may roll it in his mouth,
 All his life after I undertake
 He shall never be vex'd with the tooth-ache.
- Pot.* I pray you turn that relie about;
 Either the Trinity had the gout,
 Or else, because it is three toes in one,
 God made it as much as three toes alone. . . .
- Pard.* Good friends, I have yet here in this glass,
 Which on the drink at the wedding was
 Of Adam and Eve undoubtedly:
 If ye honour this relic devoutly,
 Although ye thirst no whit the less,
 Yet shall ye drink the more, doubtless.
 After which drinking, ye shall be as meet
 To stand on your head as on your feet.'

The stage was becoming a living power. Mary hastened a proclamation against the interludes of the reformers, while Elizabeth, on her accession, as suddenly suppressed those of the papists.

Such were the steps by which the national genius was conducted to the verge of tragedy and comedy. As the Morality had superseded the Mystery, and the Interlude that, the older retaining its hold till the younger gained strength to assert its rights; so now, in the march of intellect, they were all to give way before the drama proper, which portrays the character and actions of man, to the exclusion or subordination of the supernatural. The first play which bears the distinctive marks of a legitimate *Comedy*, is commonly considered to be *Ralph Roister Doister*, by **Nicholas Udall** (1551). The plot, without involution, progresses through five acts in rhyme more racy than elegant. Ralph is a vain, blustering, amorous hair-brain :

'So fervent hot wooing, and so far from wiving,
 I trow, never was any creature living.'

His baffled pursuit of a gay and rich widow forms the action of the piece. A group of domestics, that might have formed a

study for Shakespeare in his happiest vein, opens up the domestic scenery of the metropolis, warm with reality. Its scholastic authorship, as well as its merry-making, is shown in a proposal of marriage sent by the conceited fop to the widow, which is read to her with its sense reversed by changing the true punctuation:

‘Now by these presents I do you advertise
That I am minded to marry you in no wise.
For your goods and substance I could be content
To take you as ye are. If ye mind to be my wife,
Ye shall be assured for the time of my life
I will keep ye right well from good raiment and fare;
Ye shall not be kept but in sorrow and care.
Ye shall in no wise live at your own liberty;
But when ye are merry, I will be all sad;
When ye seek your heart’s ease I will be unkind;
At no time in me shall ye much gentleness find.’

The tragic muse was not far behind. The first English heroic tale divided into acts and scenes, and clothed in the formalities of a regular *Tragedy*, was *Gorboduc*, by **Thomas Sackville** (1562). *Gorboduc*, king of Britain about five hundred years before Christ, divides his kingdom between his two sons, Ferrex and Porrex. A quarrel between the princes results in civil war, and Ferrex is slain by his brother. The mother revenges his death by murdering Porrex in his sleep. The people, exasperated at the unnatural deed, rise in rebellion, and kill both her and the king. The nobility collect an army and destroy the rebels, but immediately fall to destroying one another. The lineal succession to the Crown is lost; and the country, without a head, is wasted by slaughter and famine. Like *Roister Doister*, *Gorboduc* is cast in the mould of classical antiquity; but instead of individual nature and real passion, it deals only in vague and labored declamations which never entered any head but the author’s. Nothing is intricate, nothing unravelled, and little pathetic. It has the form of dialogue without the spirit. Singularly frigid and unimaginative, it is not without justness, weight, and fertility of thought. Its diction is transparent. It is celebrated, moreover, as being our first tragedy in blank verse. But the measure, though the embryo of Shakespeare’s, conveys no notion of that elasticity and variety which it was destined shortly to attain. The following are the most animated lines in the whole play:

‘O mother, thou to murder thus thy child!
 Even Jove with justice must with lightning flames
 From heaven send down some strange revenge on thee.
 Ah, noble prince, how oft have I beheld
 Thee mounted on thy fierce and trampling steed,
 Shining in armor bright before the tilt,
 And with thy mistress’ sleeve tied on thy helm,
 And charge thy staff—to please thy lady’s eye—
 That bowed the headpiece of thy friendly foe!’

In these exact lines, stealing on with care but with fear, we fail to discover the potent spirit who planned the *Mirror for Magistrates*,¹ and, resigning that noble scheme to inferior hands, left as its model the *Induction*. Tragical, like *Gorboduc*, in idea and plot, it has the vigor of creative imagination. It is the congenial offspring of a gloomy genius in a night of storm, which may be thought to receive a ghastly complexion from the lurid flames that wrap the victims of persecution. Amid the shadows of the darkening day, across the faded fields swept by the wintry wind, the poet, as he pursues his lonely way, marks the gray grass, the blasted flowers, the bare boughs, the wan clouds, and sees in them the type of the state of man; but suddenly as he redoubles his pace,—

‘In black all clad there fell before my face
 A piteous wight. . . .
 Her body small, forwithered and forspent,
 As is the stalk with summer’s drouth opprest;
 Her wealked face with woful tears besprent,
 Her colour pale, and as it seemd her best,
 In woe and plaint reposed was her rest;
 And, as the stone that drops of water wears,
 So dented were her cheeks with fall of tears.’

Sorrow guides him into the region of death, there to hear from the dead the stories of their woes. Here, among other dreadful and hideous shapes, is Old Age:

‘Crooked-backed he was, tooth-shaken, and blear-eyed,
 Went on three feet, and sometime crept on four;
 With old lame bones, that rattled by his side;
 His scalp all piled, and he with eld forelore; [bald
 His withered fist still knocking at death’s door;
 Fumbling and drivelling as he draws his breath;
 For brief, the shape and messenger of Death.’

It is the recurrence of the deep poetic instinct, the feeling of misery and mortality, the sad sense of limitless darkness, the sombre conception of the world, which this race has manifested from its origin, which it will preserve to its end.

¹ A series of poetic narratives of the disasters of men eminent in English story.

Thenceforward the drama makes rapid progress, passing from youth to a splendid maturity with enormous strides, and extending in a single generation over all the provinces of history, imagination, and fancy, with that breadth of anticipation and intoxication of heart which the ardent soul may experience, when from being a child it has become a man and feels a new-glowing joy shoot through nerve and vein. Expanding with the growing taste, it quits the Palace, the Inns, the Universities, where it is compressed, and creates in 1576 a public theatre and a national audience. Before the end of the century, eleven theatres and nearly two hundred dramas attest the absorbing passion. Latin, French, Italian, and Spanish, are ransacked 'to furnish the play-house of London.' Listen to the groans of the Puritan:

'The daily abuse of stage plays is such an offense to the godly, and so great a hindrance to the Gospel, as the Papists do exceedingly rejoice at the blemish thereof, and not without cause; for every day in the week the player's bills are set up in sundry places of the city; . . . so that, when the bells toll to the lecturer, the trumpets sound to the stages. Whereat the wicked faction of Rome laugheth for joy, while the godly weep for sorrow. . . . It is a woful sight to see two hundred proud players jet in their silks, while five hundred poor people starve in the streets. . . . Woe is me! the play-houses are pestered when the churches are naked. At the one, it is not possible to get a place; at the other, void seats are plenty.'

Some of the theatres are used as cock-pits, some for bull-baiting and bear-baiting, all are poor and squalid. On the banks of the Thames rises the principal one, the Globe, a hexagonal tower, surrounded by a muddy ditch, surmounted by a red flag, and roofed by the sky, retaining in its form and arrangements traces of the old model—the inn-yard. Into the pit, the sun shines and the rain falls without let or hindrance; but their bodies are inured to exposure, and they don't trouble themselves about it. The poor are there, as well as the rich; for they have sixpenny, twopenny, and even penny seats. With the actors, on the rush-strewn stage, which is covered with thatch, are the elegant and the dainty, who pay a shilling for admittance. For an extra shilling, they can have a stool. If stools or benches are lacking, they stretch themselves on the floor. They smoke, drink, swear, insult the pit, who pay them back in kind, and fling apples at them in the bargain. Over them, in a lofty gallery are the musicians. Below, in the circle of the pit, while they wait for the piece, cards are shuffled, oaths resound, ale-pots clatter, blows are exchanged. When the beer takes effect, there is a receptacle

for general use. When the fumes rise, they cry, 'Burn the juniper!' They are amusing themselves after their fashion. At one o'clock — Sundays included — the flag is hoisted, to announce the hour of the performance. When the trumpet sounds, a figure in a long black velvet cloak comes forward to recite the prologue. Then the play begins, the players in masks and wigs, and attired in the richest dress of the day. If the *house* are not suited, they hiss, whistle, crow, yell, perhaps fall upon the actors and turn the theatre upside down. The appointments are barbarous, but imaginations are fervid and supply what is wanting. Wooden imitations of animals, towers, forests, etc., are the scenery. A bed suggests a bed-room. A rough table, with drinking vessels, replaces a dingy throne and turns a palace into a tavern. A young man, just shaven, stands for a queen. A scroll in big letters, hung out in view of the spectators, informs them that they are in London, Athens, or Paris. Three combatants on a side determine the fate of an empire. Says Sir Philip Sidney:

'You shall have Asia of the one side, and Africke of the other, and so many other under-kingdoms, that the Plaier when hee comes in must ever begin with telling where hee is, or else the tale will not be conceived. Now shall you have three Ladies walke to gather flowers, and then wee must beleve the stage to be a garden. By and by wee heare newes of shipwracke in the same place, then wee are to blame if we accept it not for a rocke; . . . while in the meane time two armies flie in, represented with foure swordes and bucklers, and then what hard heart will not receive it for a pitched field?'

The actors — at first strolling companies under the patronage of some nobleman, as security against the laws which brand all strollers as vagabonds and rogues — are neglected or despised by those whom they entertain. Their social position is not far above that of the jester who shakes his cap and bells at the tables of the great. Nearly all are writers. Most are born of the people, yet educated. The majority are accomplished in the classics. The manager gives them work, advances them money, and receives their manuscripts or their wardrobes. For a play he allows them seven or eight pounds. Their trade of author scarcely brings bread. Rarely, like Shakespeare, they contrive, by a judicious investment of early gains to acquire a third and more fruitful source of income, — a theatre-share. Generally, they are wild Bohemians, improvident, poor, full of excess, and die untimely by exhaustion or violence.

Such are the externals. We have seen what the interior must

be; for the drama is but the moral, social, and physical expression of the age in which it lives; and the poets who establish it carry in themselves the intensified sentiments and passions of those around them. They will reproduce the entire man,—his finest aspirations and his savagest appetites, the low and the lofty, the ideal and the sensual. So does **Marlowe**, the true founder of the dramatic school, the mightiest of Shakespeare's pioneers. Born in 1564, son of a shoemaker, he was the proudest and fiercest of aristocrats. At seventeen he was in Cambridge. Studied theology, and became a sceptic. Returning to London, he turned actor, broke his leg in a scene of debauchery, and turned author. Rebellious in manners, he was rebellious in creed; declared Moses a juggler; was accused of saying that 'yf he wer to write a new religion, he wolde undertake both a more excellent and a more admirable methode'; was prosecuted for avowed infidelity, and, if time had not failed, would probably have been brought to the stake. In love with a harlot, he tried to stab his rival; his hand was turned, and the blade entered his own eye and brain, and he died, at thirty, cursing and blaspheming. A Puritan ballad, in which he is called *Wormall*, draws the moral:

'Take warning, ye that plays do make,
And ye that them do act.
Desist in time, for Wormall's sake,
And think upon his fact.'

His first play, *Tamburlaine the Great*, is characteristic,—a picture of boundless ambition and murderous rage. The hero is a shepherd, who aspires to the throne of Persia, scornful of restraint, and ready to put men to the sword or to rail at the gods. He says, giant-like:

'For in a field, whose superficies
Is cover'd with a liquid purple veil,
And sprinkled with the brains of slaughtered men
My royal chair of state shall be advanc'd;
And he that means to place himself therein,
Must armed wade up to the chin in blood, . . .
And I would strive to swim through pools of blood,
Or make a bridge of murder'd carcasses,
Whose arches should be fram'd with bones of Turks,
Ere I would lose the title of a king.'

Seated in a chariot, drawn by captive kings, he berates them for their slowness:

‘Hallo! ye pampered jades of Asia!
What, can ye draw but twenty miles a day?’

And adds, with purest splendor, as with swaggering fustian:

‘*The horse that guide the golden eye of heaven,
And blow the morning from their nostrils,
Making their fiery gait above the clouds,
Are not so honored in their governor
As you, ye slaves, in mighty Tamburlaine.*’

All the ferocities of the middle-age are in the *Jew of Malta*. If there is less bombast than in *Tamburlaine*, there is even more horror. Barabbas, the Jew, robbed by the Christians, has been maddened with hate till he is no longer human. He says to his servant:

‘Hast thou no trade? then listen to my words,
And I will teach thee that shall stick by thee:
First, be thou void of these affections,
Compassion, love, vain hope, and heartless fear;
Be moved at nothing, see thou pity none,
But to thyself smile when the Christians moan. . . .
I walk abroad a-nights,
And kill sick people groaning under walls:
Sometimes I go about and poison wells. . . .
Being young, I studied physic, and began
To practice first upon the Italian;
There I enriched the priests with burials,
And always kept the sexton’s arms in ure
With digging graves and ringing dead men’s knells. . . .
I fill’d the jails with bankrounts in a year,
And with young orphans planted hospitals.’

By forged letters he causes his daughter’s lovers to slay each other. She leaves him, and he poisons her. A friar comes to convert him, and he strangles him, joking with his cut-throat slave, who rejoices in the neatness of the job:

‘Pull amain,
‘Tis neatly done sir; here’s no print at all:
So, let him lean upon his staff; excellent!
He stands as if he were begging of bacon.’

A true painting, conceived with an intensity and executed with a sweep of imagination unknown before. So in *Edward II*, all is impetuous, excessive, and abrupt. Furies and hatreds clash; helplessness and misery wait for their hour alike in the fortalices of strength and the high places of pleasure. He who has seen and felt with volcanic energy the heights and depths of imagination and license can paint, more powerfully than Shakespeare in *Richard II*, the heart-breaking distress of a dying king:

Edward. Weep'st thou already? List awhile to me,
And then thy heart, were it as Gurney's is,
Or as Matrevis, hewn from the Caucasus,
Yet will it melt ere I have done my tale.
This dungeon where they keep me, is the sink
Wherein the filth of all the castle falls.

Lightborn. Oh villains!

Edward. And here in mire and puddle have I stood
This ten days' space; and lest that I should sleep,
One plays continually upon a drum.
They give me bread and water, being a king;
So that, for want of sleep and sustenance,
My mind's distemper'd, and my body's numb'd;
And whether I have limbs or no, I know not.
Oh! would my blood drop out from every vein,
As doth this water from my tatter'd robes!
Tell Isabel, the Queen, I look'd not thus,
When for her sake I ran at tilt in France,
And there unhors'd the Duke of Cleremont.

What are we but sports of every pressure of the air? What is life but a crushing fatality? A wreck upon the shore of time. At most, a brief day of joy or victory, then the silence and gloom of the Illimitable. Mortimer, brought to the block, says, with the mournful heroism of the old sea-kings:

'Base Fortune, now I see, that in thy wheel
There is a point, to which when men aspire,
They tumble headlong down: that point I touched,
And, seeing there was no place to mount up higher,
Why should I grieve at my declining fall?—
Farewell, fair queen: weep not for Mortimer,
That scorns the world, and, as a traveller,
Goes to discover countries yet unknown.'

So in *Faustus*, which best reflects the genius and experience of Marlowe, the overshadowing thought is—

'Ay, we must die an everlasting death . . .
What will be, shall be; divinity, adieu!'

Therefore enjoy, at any cost, though you be swallowed up on the morrow; nor say to the passing moment, 'Stay, thou art so fair,' but seek forever the intoxicating whirl. Faustus, glutted with 'learning's golden gifts,' swells with desire for the magician's power:

'Emperors and kings
Are but obeyed in their several provinces;
But his dominion that exceeds in this,
Stretches as far as doth the mind of man.
A sound magician is a mighty god. . . .
How I am glutted with conceit of this! . . .
I'll have them fly to India for gold,
Ransack the ocean for orient pearl. . . .

I'll have them read me strange philosophy,
 And tell the secrets of all foreign kings;
 I'll have them wall all Germany with brass,
 And make swift Rhine circle fair Wittenberg.'

To satisfy these vast desires, he summons, by his mystic art,
 Mephistophilis from Hell:

Faust. And what are you that live with Lucifer?

Meph. Unhappy spirits that fell with Lucifer,
 Conspired against our God with Lucifer,
 And are forever damned with Lucifer.

Faust. How comes it then that thou art out of hell?

Meph. Why this is hell, nor am I out of it;
 Think'st thou that I, that saw the face of God
 And tasted the eternal joys of heaven,
 Am not tormented with ten thousand hells
 In being deprived of everlasting bliss?
 O Faustus, leave these frivolous demands
 Which strike a terror to my fainting soul.

Faust. What! Is great Mephistophilis so passionate
 For being deprived of the joys of heaven?
 Learn then of Faustus manly fortitude,
 And scorn those joys thou never shalt possess.'

Boldly, to obtain four-and-twenty years of power, he sends an
 offer of his soul to Lucifer:

'Had I as many souls as there be stars
 I'd give them all for Mephistophilis.
 By him I'll be great emperor of the world,
 And make a bridge through the moving air. . . .
 Why should'st thou not? Is not thy soul thy own?'

At midnight the answer comes, and the bond is signed with
 blood. Pangs of conscience come. Good and evil angels plead,
 and he cries:

'O Christ, my Saviour, my Saviour,
 Help thou to save distressed Faustus' soul!'

Too late, says the demon. Plunge into the rushing of time, into
 the rolling of accident, and deaden thought in the feast of the
 senses:

'Oh, might I see hell, and return again,
 How happy were I then!'

He is conducted invisible over the whole world, around the
 whole circle of sensual pleasure and earthly glory, hurried and
 devoured by desires and conceptions that burn within him like
 a furnace with bickering flames. Ever and anon, in the midst
 of his transports, he starts, falters, and struggles with the toils
 of Destiny:

'I will renounce this magic and repent. . . .
 My heart's so harden'd I cannot repent;
 Scarce can I name salvation, faith, or heaven,
 But fearful echoes thunder in mine ears,
 "Faustus thou art damned!" the swords, and knives,
 Poison, guns, halters, and envenom'd steel,
 Are laid before me, to despatch myself,
 Had not sweet pleasure conquer'd deep despair.
 Have not I made blind Homer sing to me
 Of Alexander's love and Œnon's death?
 And hath not he, that built the walls of Thebes
 With ravishing sound of his melodious harp,
 Made music with my Mephistophilis?
 Why should I die, then, or basely despair?
 I am resolved; Faustus shall ne'er repent.
 Come Mephistophilis, let us dispute again,
 And argue of divine astrology.'

The term expires, and the forfeit is exacted. Faustus has run the round of his brilliant dream, and stands on the brink of the Bottomless. Never was such an accumulation of horrors and anguish. Mephistophilis gives him a dagger. An old man enters, and with loving words warns him:

'Oh, stay, good Faustus, stay thy desperate steps!
 I see an angel hover o'er thy head,
 And with a vial full of precious grace
 Offers to pour the same into thy soul:
 Then call for mercy, and avoid despair.'

He would weep, but the devil draws in his tears; he would raise his hands, but he cannot. The lovely Helen is conjured up, between two Cupids, to prevent his relapse, and the wildfire kindles in his heart:

'Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships,
 And burnt the topless tow'rs of Ilium?
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.
 Her lips suck forth my soul! See where it flies.
 Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.
 Here will I dwell, for Heav'n is in these lips,
And all is dross that is not Helena.
 I will be Paris, and for love of thee,
 Instead of Troy shall Wittenberg be sack'd;
 And I will combat with weak Menelaus,
 And wear thy colours on my plumed crest;
 Yea I will wound Achilles in the heel,
 And then return to Helen for a kiss.
*Oh! thou art fairer than the evening air,
 Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars.'*

The clock strikes eleven. He implores the mountains and hills to fall upon him, would rush headlong into the gaping earth, but it will not harbor him:

‘Oh, Faustus!

Now hast thou but one bare hour to live,
And then thou must be damn'd perpetually!
Stand still, you ever-moving spheres of heaven,
That time may cease, and midnight never come! . . .
The stars move still, time runs, the clock will strike,
The devil will come, and Faustus must be damn'd.
Oh, I'll leap up to my God!—Who pulls me down?—
See, see, where Christ's blood streams in the firmament!
One drop would save my soul, half a drop: ah, my Christ,
Ah, rend not my heart for naming of my Christ!
Yet will I call on him.'

The clock strikes the half hour:

‘Ah, half the hour is past! 'twill all be past anon. . . .
Let Faustus live in hell a thousand years,
A hundred thousand, and at last be saved.'

The clock strikes twelve:

‘It strikes! it strikes: Now body turn to air,
Or Lucifer will bear thee quick to hell.
Oh soul! be changed into small water-drops,
And fall into the ocean: ne'er be found.'

This tormented soul, who reels from desire to enjoyment, from the diabolical to the divine, is not the philosophic type of Goethe's *Faust*, the ferment of whose spirit impels him towards the ‘far-away,’ though both are equally lost in the end; but I find nothing in that tragedy equal, in power of delineation, to this closing scene of terror, despair, and remorse.

If ever there was poet born, Marlowe was one. His poetry is irregular, but the irregularity is that of the extreme flight of virgin nature, the inequality of the young, eager, bounding blood. His Faustus was his twin-spirit, the expression of the social life of the period,—restless, self-asserting, hot-headed, and omnivorous. Extremes meet, at such times, in such men. With capacity for Titanic conceptions, they render gentlest beauty into sweetest music. Capable of enamored hate and soundless sensuality, they are also capable of the most delicate tenderness and the purest dreams. Thus Marlowe could leave his powerful verse, his images of fury, and say to his lady-love, in strains like the breath of the morning which has swept over flowery meads:

‘Come live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove,
That hill and valley, grove and field,
And all the craggy mountains yield.
There will we sit upon the rocks,

And see the shepherds feed their flocks
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals,
 There will I make thee beds of roses,
 With a thousand fragrant posies;
 A cap of flowers and a kirtle
 Embroider'd all with leaves of myrtle;
 A gown made of the finest wool
 Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
 Slippers lin'd choicely for the cold,
 With buckles of the purest gold;
 A belt of straw, and ivy buds,
 With coral clasps and amber studs.
The shepherd swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning;
 And if these pleasures may thee move,
Then live with me and be my love.'

What are the marked characteristics of this drama, now advanced to the point from which Shakespeare will rise to the supreme heights of poetry?—*Tamurlaine*, the first play in blank verse which was publicly acted, drove the rhymed couplet from the stage, and fixed forever the metre of English tragedy as blank. Not only did the author popularize the measure, but he perfected it: he created a new metre by the melody, variety, and force which he infused into the iambic; not a fixed, unalterable type, in which the verse moves to the common and despotic beat of time, but a Proteus, whose varying pauses, speed, and grouping of syllables make one measure represent a thousand. It flows impetuous and many-colored, like the spirit which feels it—not studies it—and revels in a stream of images. Consider the didactic dignity of the following:

'Our souls whose faculties can comprehend
 The wondrous architecture of the world,
 And measure every wandering planet's course,
 Still climbing after knowledge infinite,
 And always moving as the restless spheres,
 Will us to wear ourselves, and never rest
 Until we reach the ripest fruit of all,
 That perfect bliss and sole felicity,
 The sweet fruition of an earthly crown.'

Or the variable modulations of these lines—in particular, the daring but successful license of the first and third:

'Bags of fiery opals, sapphires, amethysts,
 Jacinths, hard topaz, grass-green emeralds,
 Beauteous rubies, sparkling diamonds,
 And sold seen costly stones of so great price,
 As one of them, indifferently rated,
 May serve, in peril of calamity,
 To ransom great kings from captivity.'

Or the changeful temper, the ‘plastic stress’ of these:

‘Mortimer! who talks of Mortimer,
Who wounds me with the name of Mortimer,
That bloody man? Good father, on thy lap
Lay I this head laden with mickle care.
O, might I never ope these eyes again,
Never again lift up this drooping head,
O, never more lift up this dying heart!’

Single lines, struck in the heat of glowing passion or fancy, seem to leave a track of fire:

‘Tyrants swim safest in a crimson flood.’
‘Adders and serpents, let me breathe awhile!’
‘And blow the morning from their nostrils.’
‘See, see, where Christ’s blood *streams* in the firmament.’
‘Thence flew Love’s arrow with the golden head.’
‘I know he is not dead; I know proud death
Durst not behold such sacred majesty.’

Not inaptly has a living poet described Marlowe as singing —

‘With mouth of gold, and morning in his eyes.’

For this is his contribution to the heroic style,—that he found it insipidly regular, and left it various, sometimes redundant, sometimes deficient, enriched with unexpected emphases and changes in the beat. Shakespeare will only refine it from wordiness, and use it with more than Marlowe’s versatility and power.

Our first tragedy and comedy observed the classical or dramatic unities: *Unity of Action*, which required that the action represented should be *one, complete, and important*; *Unity of Time*, which required that the incidents of the play should naturally occur within one day; *Unity of Place*, which required that the entire action should naturally occur in the same locality. The Greek drama, relying thus upon form or proportion, owed its charm to a certain union and regularity of feeling. In its sphere, it spoke, felt, and acted *according to nature*—that is, nature under the given circumstances; but it was limited by the physical conditions of time and space, as well as bound to a certain dignity and attitude of expression, selection and grouping of figures, as in a statue. But this was too formal and stately to suit the tastes and wants of an age or people distinguished by its novelty, strangeness, and contrast. The whole framework of society—customs, manners, aspirations, religion—had changed.

Hence a sudden revolution in the dramatic art. Our poets, who felt the excitement of the new life, disdained paths previously made, scorned the thralldom of Greece, the servility of Rome. They had to address no scholastic critics, but the *people*. As one of them said,—

‘They would have *good plays*, and not produce
Such musty fopperies of antiquity;
Which do not suit the humorous age’s back
With clothes in fashion.’

To win a mutable attention required a multiform shape. At once they clung to the human nature before them,—its appetites, passions, frailties, hopes, imaginations, heights of ecstacy and depths of depravity. The theatre, mingling the comic with the tragic, was to be a mirror of enchantment,—Gothic in the scope of its design and the boldness of its execution. While Italy and France were adhering to the contracted antique model, two nations—England and Spain—were thus spontaneously creating a national drama accordant with their own sympathies and experiences—a movable reflection of themselves.

Prose.—The poetry of the period, as the overflow of natural enthusiasm, has a decided ascendancy in quantity and quality; but the powerful vitality which impels it and makes it great, begins also the era of prose. The insatiable desire of the mind to beget its own image gives the primary impulse. The reformation of religion, the revival of antiquity, the influx of Italian letters, traditions of the past, speculations of the future, invention, travel, and discovery, give the materials. Philology begins, notably with Cheke and Mulcaster; artistic theory and criticism, with Sidney, Wilson, Ascham, and Puttenham, who explore the rules of style; narratives of adventure and observation, with Hakluyt¹; history, with Holinshed, More, and Raleigh; the essay, with Lord Bacon; rational theology, with Hooker; romantic or fanciful fiction, with Lily. In physics, medicine, and law, curiosity is rife. Editions and revisals of the Scriptures increased. The roar and dash of opinions creates and multiplies pamphleteers, Anglican and Puritan, sectarian and secular,—Skelton a virulent one, Roy a merciless one, Fish a seditious one, Greene an incessant one, Nash a brilliant one. Men’s brains are busy, their

¹ *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, and Discoveries made by the English Nation.*

spirits stirring, their hearts full. With the new resources of thought and language, comes a new sense of literary beauty—a new-born pleasure in delicacy and grandeur of phrase, in the choice of words and the structure of sentences. We see it first in **Lily's** *Euphues*,¹ the story of a young Athenian who, after spending some time in Italy, visits England in 1579. Its form is Italian, and its style a skilful elaboration of the Italian taste for alliteration, verbal antithesis, far-fetched allusion. To ladies and lords, it was a novel enchantment to read:

'There is no privilege that needeth a pardon, neither is there any remission to be asked, where a commission is granted. I speake this, Gentlemen, not to excuse the offence which was taken, but to offer a defence where I was mistaken. A cleare conscience is a sure card, truth hath the prerogative to speake with plainnesse, and the modesty to heare with patience. It was reported of some, and beleueed of many, that in the education of Ephoebus, where mention is made of Uniuersities, that Oxford was to much either defaced or defamed. I know not what the enuious have picked out by malice, or the curions by wit, or the guilty by their own galled consciences; but this I say, that I was as farre from thinking ill as I find them from iudging well. But if I should goe about to make amends, I were then faulty in somewhat amisse, and should shew my selfe like Apelles Prentice, who coueting to mend the nose marred the neck; and not vnlike the foolish Dier, who neuer thought his cloth black vntil it was burned. If any fault be committed, impute it to Euphues who knew you not, not to Lylie who hates you not.'

Once more in Athens, Euphues writes:

'Gentlemen, Euphues is musing in the bottom of the mountain Silixedra, Philautus is married in the Isle of England: two friends parted, the one living in the delights of his new wife, the other in contemplation of his old griefs.'

The new fashion, universally admired, ran into extravagance without elegance, overloaded, strained, and motley. **Stanihurst** in the dedication of a history of Ireland writes, quaintly and ludicrously:

'My verie good Lord, there have beene diuerse of late, that with no small toile, and great commendation, haue throughlie imploied themselues in culling and packing together the scrapings and fragments of the historie of Ireland. Among which crue, my fast friend, and inward companion, maister Edmund Campion did so learnedlie bequite himselfe, in the penning of certeine breefe notes, concerning that countrie, as certes it was greatlie to be lamented, that either his theame had not beene shorter, or else his leasure had not beene longer. For if Alexander were so rauisht with Homer his historie, that notwithstanding Thersites were a crabbed and a rugged dwarfe, being in outward feature so deformed, and inward conditions so crooked, as he seemed to stand to no better steed, than to lead apes in hell.'

There was just time for **Gosson** to have read *Euphues* before he wrote in *The School of Abuse*:

'The title of my book doth promise much, the volume you see is very little: and sithens I cannot bear out my folly by authority, like an emperor, I will crave

¹ From the Greek, meaning *well-grown*, *symmetrical* hence *clever*, *witty*. It was really on the culmination of the growing influence of Italian conceits and quibbles.

pardon for my phrensy by submission, as your worship's to command. The school which I build is narrow, and at the first blush appeareth but a dog-hole; yet small clouds carry water; slender threads sew sure stitches; little hairs have their shadows; blunt stones whet knives; from hard rocks flow soft springs; the whole world is drawn in a map, Homer's "Iliad" in a nutshell, a king's picture in a penny.'

Comparisons mount one above another, sense disappears, attitudes are visible. But out of this youthful wantonness will spring complete art. Tinsel and pedantry will pass, beauty and merit will remain. Prose, born of thought rather than of feeling, does not reach literary excellence till the imagination is regulated, and the gaze is fixed, not to admire, but to understand.

History.—A whole class of industrious antiquaries collected the annals of the by-gone world, and embodied them in English shape, supplying materials for the historical dramatist and the future historian. Daniel gave to the chronicle a purer literary form, while **Raleigh's** *History of the World* showed the widening of historic interest beyond national bounds. If there was no rhyming, there was little accuracy, and no attempt at a minute tracing of cause and effect; that was to come. The compilers, following the beaten path, usually began at the Creation and continued to the date of publication. Credulity still darkened the field, and, surveying it complacently, they gathered contentedly, with both hands, seldom doubting the truth of what from childhood they had been taught to believe. Thus **Holinshed**, the most complete of our chroniclers, thinks it probable that Britain was peopled before the Deluge, and supposes these primitive Britons to have been drowned in the flood. He can vouch for the arrival of Ulysses, inclines to the derivation of *Albion* from a huge giant of that name, and relates the story of Brute, the great-grandson of Æneas, with unquestioning confidence. He inserts a one-line notice of 'Caxton as the first practicer of the art of printing,' but is more intent in the same paragraph to speak of 'a bloody rain, the red drops falling on the sheets which had been hanged to dry.' It was reserved for Raleigh, in his unfinished but ambitious work, to strike into a virgin vein, and make the ordinary events of history assume a new face by the noble speculations which he builds on them, often profound, oftener eloquent.

Theology.—A new era of creed-formations set in. The *Articles* of the Anglican Church, now in number thirty-nine,

were originally forty-two, drawn up under the supervision of Cranmer as the bonds of Christian union, the conditions of Christian fellowship. It is asserted, in this confession of faith,—

1. That there is an infinite Spirit, and ‘in the unity of this Godhead there be three persons of one substance, power, and eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.’

2. That the fall of Adam ‘brought death into the world and all our woe.’

3. That, by Adam’s transgression, we are shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin.

4. That Christ, of the same substance with the Father, died for our original guilt and our actual sins.

5. That *none* can emerge from this state of pollution, and be saved, but by Christ.

6. That every person born into the world ‘deserveth God’s wrath and damnation.’

7. That ‘*predestination to life* is the everlasting purpose of God . . . to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind.’

The English Reformers can scarcely be said to have arrived at any definite conclusions. Luther and Calvin framed the speculative doctrines for Protestant Europe. Both declared the utter depravity of human nature, and ‘eternal fire’ the punishment of the lost. Calvin was an uncompromising predestinarian, who taught that the Fall with all its consequences was predetermined ages before the Creation; that the fate of each individual was thus irrevocably decided before he was called into existence; that out of the ruined race a few are selected for eternal bliss; that the rest are pre-ordained to ‘most grievous torments in soul and body without intermission in hell-fire for ever.’ Luther was only less explicit, hardly aware, perhaps, of the extreme to which his acrimonious zeal logically carried him. The mild and sagacious Erasmus had written a defence of free-will, to which Luther replies:

‘The human will is like a beast of burden. If God mounts it, it wishes and goes as God wills; if Satan mounts it, it wishes and goes as Satan wills. Nor can it choose the rider it would prefer, or betake itself to him, but it is the riders who contend for its possession.’

Again:

‘This is the acme of faith, to believe that He is merciful who saves so few and who condemns so many; that He is just who at His own pleasure has made us necessarily doomed to damnation.’

Thus the two great founders of Protestantism designed, it would appear, to construct a religious system which should be as distinct and exclusive as that which they assailed, but which should represent more faithfully the teachings of the first four centuries. The Puritans, simple and rigorous, preferred the grim and pitiless features of the Calvinistic system, whose spirit, however, has long been yielding to conciliation and charity. The Anglicans, practical, prudent, and more worldly, favored rather the less gloomy and more conservative system of Luther. Both found common ground in the idea of the inexorable Judge, the alarm of conscience, the impotence and inherited poison of nature, the necessity of grace, the rejection of rites and ceremonies. A period of passion and conflict throws men naturally upon dogmatic systems, nor is the mind easily extricated from old theological modes of thought. A century was required to develop fully the germ of rationalism that had been cast abroad. Still, the intellect was moving onward, the tenor of life was changing, and at the close of the century the disposition was perceptible to interpret the articles of special creeds, not by the precept and example of tradition, but by the light of reason and of conscience. A remarkable evidence of the transition is found in *Jewel's Apology*, and, a generation later, in *Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity*,—the two most important theological works which appeared in England during the reign of Elizabeth. Both wrote with the avowed object of defending the Established Church, but their methods are entirely different. The first inculcates the importance of faith, collects the decisions of antiquity, and regards the mere assertions of the Fathers, when uncontradicted by Scripture, as proofs positive. The second insists upon the exercise of reason, and lays little stress upon the ancients, evidently considering that his readers would be slightly impressed by their unsupported opinions. He says:

‘For men to be tied and led by authority, as it were with a kind of captivity of judgment, and, though there be reason to the contrary, not to listen unto it, but to follow, like beasts, the first in the herd, they know not nor care not whither: this were brutish. Again, that authority of men should prevail with men, either against or above Reason, is no part of our belief. Companies of learned men, be they never so great and reverend, are to yield unto Reason.’

¹ Written in 1561 or 1562. This, the Bible, and Fox's *Martyrs* were ordered ‘to be fixed in all parish churches, to be read by the people.’

When this could be said, the English intellect had made immense progress.

With the revolution in Church, preaching changed its object and character. It became more earnest, popular, and moral. The Age of Doctrines was to follow. In the pulpit, it was not yet sought to exhibit dialectics, but to recall men—sailors, soldiers, workmen, servants—to their duties. At least, this is what we see in the sermons of **Latimer** (1472–1555), a genuine Englishman, serious, courageous, and solid, sprung from the heart and sinews of the nation. He never speaks for the sake of speaking. With him, practice is before all; theology—the metaphysics of religion—secondary. To reprove the rich, who oppress the poor by enclosures, he details the needs of the peasant:

‘A plough land must have sheep; yea, they must have sheep to dung their ground for bearing of corn; for if they have no sheep to help to fat the ground, they shall have but bare corn and thin. They must have swine for their food, to make their veneries or bacon of: their bacon is their venison, for they shall now have *hangum tuum* if they get any other venison; so that bacon is their necessary meat to feed on, which they may not lack. They must have other cattle: as horses to draw their plough, and for carriage of things to the markets; and kine for their milk and cheese, which they must live upon and pay their rents. These cattle must have pasture, which pasture if they lack, the rest must needs fail them: and pasture they cannot have, if the land be taken in, and enclosed from them.’

Only the wish to convince, to denounce vice, and to do justice. No grand words, no show of style, no exaltation. Generally, it may be observed, the preachers of the earlier part of the sixteenth century were accustomed to take a wide range, to bring together into a miscellaneous assortment topics from every region of heaven and earth. Not more fastidious as to manner. Their style, like that of most contemporary prose, is simpler in construction, more familiar and homely, than that which came into fashion in the later years of the Elizabethan period. Their kind of writing, however, though indirectly interesting and historically valuable, can hardly be regarded as partaking the character of literary composition.

But that which penetrated the imagination and language of England more than any word, lay or ecclesiastic, was the Bible itself, wherein the simple folk, without other books and open to new emotions, pricked by the reproaches of conscience and the presentiment of the dark future, looked suddenly with awe and trembling upon the face of the eternal King, read or heard the

tables of his law, the archives of his vengeance, and with the whole attention of eyes and heart filled themselves with his promises and threats. Condemned, hunted, in concealment, **Tyndale** translated from the Greek, in the reign of Henry VIII, the New Testament and a portion of the Old. It was this Book which, revised by Coverdale, and edited in 1539, as *Cromwell's Bible*, again in 1540, as *Cranmer's Bible*, was set up in every English parish church by the very sovereign who had caused the translator to be strangled and burned. It was not only a discovery of salvation to the troubled conscience, but the revelation of a new literature—the only literature practically accessible to all, and comprising at once legends and annals, war-song and psalm, philosophy and vision. Imagine the effect upon minds essentially unoccupied by any history, romance, or poetry, and anxiously alive to the grandeurs and terrors which pass before their eyes as they gather in crowds Sunday after Sunday, day after day, to hear its marvellous accent:

‘Many well-disposed people used much to resort to the hearing thereof, especially when they could get any that had an audible voice to read to them. . . . One John Porter used sometimes to be occupied in that goodly exercise, to the edifying of himself as well as others. This Porter was a fresh young man and of a big stature; and great multitudes would resort thither to hear him, because he could read well and had an audible voice.’

The Koran alone can boast an equal share of reverence, spread far and wide; and as a mere literary monument, the English Bible is the noblest example of the English tongue. Of its 6,000 words, only 250 are not in common use, and nearly all of these last are readily understood.

Ethics.—Occam, the Nominalist, had taught that moral distinctions originate in the arbitrary appointment of God; that ‘no act is evil but as prohibited by Him, or which cannot be made good by His command.’

Catholics, who appealed to tradition, Protestants, who appealed only to Scripture,—confirmed the pernicious error. On none of these principles could there be a *science* of morality. *That* was possible only when men, seeking for just ideas of right and wrong, should begin to interrogate their moral sense more than the books of theologians, and make this faculty the supreme arbiter, moulding theology into conformity with its dictates. The moral was still subordinate to the dogmatic side of religion. It

needed the profound sagacity of **Hooker** to give anything like currency to the following principle, in which the rationalistic tendency to a philosophy of morals is first decidedly manifest:

‘Those precepts which learned men have committed to writing, transcribing them from the common reason and common feelings of human nature, are to be accounted not less divine than those contained in the tables given to Moses; nor was it God’s intention to supersede by a law graven on stone that which is written with His own finger on the table of the heart.’

Two years later, in 1596, appeared **Lord Bacon’s** *Essays*, which, if they offered nothing new to the English heart, revealed much to the English consciousness, and formed an emphatic agency in the history of English practical ethics.

In general, estimated by the standard of the present, moral perceptions were clouded, and moral sympathies were neither expansive nor acute. Add to this the reflexive influence of religious belief—in particular, the doctrine of exclusive salvation, and we have an adequate explanation of the burnings, tortures, imprisonments, animosities and wars which for so many centuries marked the conflicts of theological bodies. As long as it was believed that those who rejected certain opinions were excluded from eternal felicity, so long would scepticism be branded a sin, and credulity a virtue. As long as the Church, by a favorite image of the Fathers, was regarded as a solitary Ark floating on a boundless sea of ruin, the heretic, as an offender against the Almighty, was to be reclaimed or punished, and heresy was to be corrected or stifled—by persuasion if possible, by violence if necessary. While some of the persecutions, even some of the most atrocious, sprang from purely selfish motives, I doubt not that they were mainly due to the sincere conviction that the cause of truth (as apprehended) required the sacrifice of its foes. Men had yet to learn that mere acts of the understanding are neither right nor wrong; and that unbelief, whether good or bad, must receive its character from the dispositions or motives which produce or pervade it.

Science.—‘In Wonder,’ says Coleridge, ‘all Philosophy began; in Wonder it ends: and Admiration fills up the interspace.’ Better, it is suggested,—and Investigation fills up the interspace. In the first wonder and the last, the poet and the philosopher are akin; but the emotion tends to different results. The former wonders at the beauty in the face of Nature, but seeks

no explanation,—reads its inner meaning, and tries to utter it. The latter wonders at what he sees, but scrutinizes appearances to find the laws which regulate them. The two processes—imaginative intuition and painful analysis—are distinct, not to be combined in one intellectual act, nor scarcely to coëxist in one mind. The latter does not assert itself till objects pass from the poetic flush of emotion into the colder region of rational insight. Therefore, beyond a few exceptional and isolated facts, there was as yet no English science. But at the close of the sixteenth century the daylight of scientific speculation and experiment had already arisen on the Continent. Memorably, after twenty years' study of the heavens from the window of his garret, **Copernicus** the Pole founded modern astronomy. He came to the conclusion, as had Aristarchus in the third century before Christ, that the sun is immovable, while the earth and planets revolve around it. Afraid of public opinion, he refused to publish. Bruno the Italian espoused his theory with ardor, propagated it, as well as the plurality of worlds, with haughty defiance,—and was burned by the Inquisition. The fact survived, soon to effect an important revolution in our conceptions. As long as the globe was believed to be the central object of the universe, and the stars but inconsiderable lights to garnish its firmament, it was assigned a similar position in the moral scheme; and every phenomenon, human and divine, terrestrial and celestial, was supposed to have some bearing upon the acts and history of man. But when this 'goodly ball' was seen to be only a moving point in infinite space—a mere infinitesimal fraction in creation, human egotism was succeeded by a depressing sense of insignificance, and the way was open for the gradual substitution of the idea of law for that of supernatural intervention.

Every priest in the Cathedral of Pisa, every woman and child at Christmas, saw the great lamps which hung from the ceiling, some by a longer, some by a shorter chain,—saw them swing in the wind that came in with the crowd, as the Christmas-doors, storied all over with mediæval fictions, opened wide; but only **Galileo**, a student not yet twenty, saw that the motion of the swinging lamps was uniform, and proportional to the length of the chain—each a great clock whereof he alone had the dial. For five hundred years these lamps, swinging slowly to and fro,

had been virtually proclaiming the law of gravitation, but Galileo was the first who heard it. This was the great principle of the Pendulum. So does genius find general laws in facts which have been familiar to everybody since the world was.

In England, meanwhile, much of the progress abroad probably remained unknown. Various mathematical works were produced in the vernacular in the first half of the century, by William Record, a physician. Says a contemporary:

‘He was the first who wrote on arithmetic in English; the first who wrote on geometry in English; the first who introduced algebra into England; the first who wrote on astronomy and the doctrine of the sphere in English; and finally the first Englishman who adopted the system of Copernicus.’

He styled the first the *Ground of Arts*; the second, *Pathway to Knowledge*; the third, *Whetstone of Wit*; the fourth, the *Castle of Knowledge*. In 1599, Thomas Hill published *The School of Skill*, which is described as ‘an account of the heavens and the surface of the earth, replete with those notions on astrology and physics which are not very common in the works of Record.’ The author refers to the scheme of Pythagoras and Copernicus, by which, as he expresses it, ‘they took the earth from the middle of the world, and placed it in a peculiar orb.’ He adds:

‘But overpassing such reasons, lest by the newness of the arguments they may offend or trouble young students in the art, we therefore (by true knowledge of the wise) do attribute the middle seat of the world to the earth, and appoint it the centre of the whole.’

Gilbert’s book *On Magnetism* (1600) marks the origin of the modern science of electricity. Medicine was practiced and taught on the revised principles of the ancients. Henry VIII incorporated the College of Physicians in 1518. From the time of Edward the Confessor, the power of kings to touch for the King’s Evil seems never to have been doubted, and to have been extensively exercised. The *Breviary of Health*, by Andrew Borde (1547), is a curious suggestion of the state of medical science. It has a prologue addressed to physicians, beginning:

‘Egregious doctors, and masters of the eximious and areane science of physick, of your urbanity exasperate not yourselves against me for making this little volume.’

The ‘volume’ treats not only of bodily disease, but of mental, as in ‘the 174 Chapter,’ which ‘doth shewe of an infirmitie named Hereos’:

‘*Hereos* is the Greke worde. In Latin, it is named *Amor*. In English it is named *Love-sick*, and women may haue this fickleness as well as men. Young persons be much troubled with this impediment.’

The following is the remedy prescribed:

‘First I do advertize every person not to set to the heart what another doth set to the helle. Let no man set his love so far, but that he may withdraw it betime; and muse not, but use mirth and mery company and be wyse, and not foolish.’

Philosophy.—So far as it concerns the history of philosophy, the Renaissance meant the revival of Platonism and the insurgence against scholastic antiquity. Never had monarch been so nearly universal and absolute as Aristotle. For two thousand years he had dictated to the nations what to believe. Amid all the commotions of Empire and the war of words, he had kept his throne and state, unshaken and undisturbed. His autocratical edict was placed by the side of the Gospel. His ten categories, which pretend to classify every object of human apprehension, were held as another Revelation. Universities were his sentinels. Parliaments issued decrees banishing those who maintained theses against him. His name was a synonym for reason. To contradict him was to contradict the Church, whose integrity was based on the immovable conformity of all human opinions. In vain did Galileo try to convince the learned of Pisa that bodies of unequal weight, dropped from the same height, would reach the ground in equal times. They saw the weights fall from the top of the tower, saw them strike the ground simultaneously; but they would not believe, for Aristotle had said that a ten-pound weight would fall ten times as fast as a one-pound weight. A student, having detected spots in the sun, communicated his discovery to a worthy priest, who replied:

‘My son, I have read Aristotle many times, and I assure you there is nothing of the kind mentioned by him. Go rest in peace; and be certain that the spots which you have seen are in your eyes, and not in the sun.’

But early in the sixteenth century revolt had broken forth, in Italy, in Spain, in France, in Germany, even in England. In 1535, a royal commission abolished from the two universities the works of the famous Duns Scotus. Said the report, in a tone of triumph: ‘We have set *Dunce* in Bocardo,’ and have utterly banished him from Oxford forever, with all his blind glosses.’ In 1583, **Bruno**, a lionized foreigner, a knight-errant of truth, opened under the patronage of Elizabeth, a public disputation, in which he combated the Aristotelians with stirring eloquence.

¹ A figure of syllogism terminating in a negative conclusion, and implying therefore *annihilation*.

He styled the wise conclave of his opponents ‘a constellation of pedants, whose ignorance, presumption, and rustic rudeness would have exhausted the patience of Job.’ To all the reformers, however various their doctrines, one spirit seems to have been common,—unhesitating opposition to the dominant authority. Each in his own way, the new generation were emancipating themselves from the dogmas of the ancient dictator. Scholasticism, majestic in its decay, was fast losing its hold upon the mind of the age. As yet, however, there was nothing better to accept in its stead. Being the whole philosophy, mental and physical, then taught, its abolition from the academical course was tantamount to the ejection of philosophical studies entirely. So it happens that all departments—physics, metaphysics, and ethics—were alike barren. Materials were at hand, indeed, for the most successful research; but there was need of an instructor, an organizer, who should reduce to form and method the discordant elements, and cut, as it were, a new channel in which the philosophic spirit of the world should flow.

Résumé.—The feudal system, worn out and vicious, unable to give to a general society either security or progress, disappears; and European society passes from the dominion of spiritual to that of temporal governments, in which the essential fact is centralization of power. A new and remarkable species of politicians appears—the first generation of professional statesmen, all laymen, all cultured, all men of peace, who direct the politics of England dexterously, resolutely, gloriously. The nobles cease to be military chieftains, the priests cease to possess a monopoly of learning. Chivalry, no longer a controlling institution, has been refined of its grossness, and retaining only its beauty, gives color and flavor to society, and tinctures strongly poetic sentiment. Literature proper still belongs almost exclusively to the upper classes, but these are being greatly increased by additions of rich citizens, who are growing up to be the body of the nation. Vestiges of slavery still exist, yeomen lead a coarse and brutish life, vagrancy and crime are inadequately suppressed by severe laws unequally administered. Language reaches its full stature, strong, flexible, and copious; adequate to the needs of philosophic thought and of deep and varied feeling. The aroused spirit of travel and adventure brings races

face to face, widens the sphere of human interest, and by its revelations gives life and richness to the imagination. The Reformation, connected on the one side with scholarship, unlocks the sealed treasures of the Bible, and opens the path for modern biblical criticism; connected on the other with intolerance of mere authority, it leads to what has been termed rationalism—the attempt to define the laws which underlie the religious consciousness; connected with politics, it is linked historically with the approaching Revolution. The veil woven by human hands across the brightness of Christianity is rent asunder, and a new meaning is given to the words: ‘God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.’ The Renaissance achieves the discovery of the world and of man,—the first, the exploration of the globe and the exploration of the heavens; the second, the restoration of Pagan antiquity—man in his temporal relations, and the renovation of faith—man in his spiritual relations. Printing renders indestructible all knowledge, and disseminates all thought. Science, rescued from the hands of alchemy and astrology, takes her incipient steps. Philosophy, sundered from Scholasticism and Aristotle, awaits the principle of order—the law and the lawgiver. Prose, waking larger and richer from its sleep, passes from the elegant simplicity of More to the formal rhetoric of Ascham, and thence from the extravagance of Lily and the *Euphuists* to the decorated eloquence of Raleigh and Sidney, gaining, by the close of the period, much in copiousness, in sonorousness, in splendor. Poetry, in Skelton an instrument of reform, revives as an art in Surrey, who gives a sweeter movement to English verse, and extends its ‘lyrical range.’ In the poems of Spenser are reflected the roseate hues, the higher elements, of the English Renaissance; while its higher and lower alike are reflected in the drama, which is both indigenous and national. In it is directly imaged the whole of English life—character, class, condition, in all their varieties; and the poets who establish it carry in themselves the sentiments which it displays,—happy and abundant feeling, free and full desire, the overflowing of nature, the worship of beauty and of vigor, the energy of pride, the despair of destiny, the insurrection of reason, the turbulence of passion, the brutality of evil lusts, and the

divine innocence of love, all the luxuriance and irregularity of men who feel the sudden advance of corporal well-being, and are scarcely recovered from barbarism. A constellation of kindred spirits, with unequal success but with the same unconcerned profusion, express the new art, closing around Shakespeare, who expresses it fully, towering above his fellows 'in shape and gesture proudly eminent,'—all impelled by the same causes in their whirling and eccentric career; for the productive forces which culminate in the reign of Elizabeth, ripen some of their distinctive fruits in the times immediately subsequent. The last portion of the sixteenth century, with the earlier of the seventeenth, constitutes the great era of our literary history, and the first of its stages of consecutive progress, in which the warmth of soul, the love of truth, the passion for freedom, and the sense of human dignity, are the promise of eternal development. Consider the mass of knowledge we have since acquired—knowledge infinitely curious and infinitely useful, consider how much of this kind was acquired in the ten centuries which preceded—then you may estimate the expansive force generated in this notable epoch of human growth.

MORE.

Like Cato firm, like Aristides just,
 Like rigid Cincinnatus nobly poor,—
 A dauntless soul erect, who smiled on death.—*Thomson.*

Biography.—Born in London, in 1489, of noble parentage; at fifteen, a page in the household of Cardinal Morton, who said of him: 'Whoever may live to see it, this boy now waiting at table will turn out a marvellous man'; at seventeen, a law-student in Oxford University; championed the 'Greeks' against the 'Trojans'; practised his profession; lectured on divinity; entered Parliament at twenty-two; became Speaker of the Commons; defeated the royal demand for a heavy subsidy; withdrew from public life under the royal displeasure; rose into repute at the bar, wrote and published; was forced back into the political current by the accession of Henry VIII; was soon in the king's

favor as counsellor and diplomatist; succeeded Wolsey as Chancellor in 1529, the first layman appointed to that office; refused, as a zealous Catholic, to acknowledge the validity of Henry's marriage with Anne Boleyn, or his headship of the English Church, and the neck that oft had been familiarly encircled by the royal arm was in 1535 cleft by the headsman's axe. A striking illustration of the truth of Wolsey's words to Cromwell,—

‘How wretched
Is that poor man who hangs on princes' favors!’

Writings.—He wrote numerous theological tracts, but of local or passing interest, and all inflamed by a passion which betrayed him—otherwise clear-headed—into violent expression and confusion of thought. Much of his fame as a writer rests upon his *Life of Richard III*, of doubtful historical value, but of great philological importance, as the best English secular prose which had yet been written. More is better known by his Latin work, *Utopia*,—a vision of the kingdom of ‘Nowhere,’ the leading design of which, under the veil of fanciful fiction, is to correct abuses and suggest reforms. A sailor who has voyaged into new and unknown worlds, gives him an account of an imaginary republic risen, as by enchantment, in the form of a crescent, out of the bosom of the watery waste. In its laws and institutions, in its moral and physical aspects, it realizes the author's ideal of a perfect society, and shows thus, by contrast, the defective one in which he lives. The principal city of the Utopians—

‘Is compassed about with a high and thick stone wall, full of tunnels and bulwarks. A dry ditch, but deep, goeth about three sides. On the fourth side the river serveth for a ditch. The streets be *twenty feet broad*. On the back side of the houses, through the whole length of the street, lay large gardens. The houses are curiously builded after a gorgeous and gallant sort, with three stories, one over the other, the outside being of hard plaster, or else of brick, and the inner side well strengthened with timber-work. . . . They keep the wind out of their windows with glass, for it is there much used, and also with fine linen cloth dipped in oil, for by this means more light cometh in and the wind is better kept out.’

In Utopia are no taverns, no fashions ever changing, few laws and no lawyers. All learn agriculture; and each, in addition, a trade. They labor six hours a day, and sleep eight. War is a brutal thing, hunting a degrading thing:

‘What pleasure, they ask, can one find in seeing dogs run after a hare? It ought rather to stir pity, when a weak, harmless, and timid hare is devoured by a strong, fierce, and cruel dog. Therefore, all this business of hunting is, among the Utopians, turned

over to their butchers; and they look on hunting as one of the basest parts of a butcher's work.'

Wisdom is preferred to riches, the formation of character to the accumulation of property. Virtue is nobility. Integrity is the marble statue which survives the sacking of cities and the downfall of empires:

'The Utopians wonder how any man should be so much taken with the glaring, doubtful lustre of a jewel or stone, that can look up to a star, or to the sun itself: or how any should value himself because his cloth is made of finer thread; for, how fine soever that thread may be, it was once no better than the fleece of a sheep, and that sheep was a sheep still for all its wearing it. They wonder much to hear that gold, which in itself is so useless a thing, should be everywhere so much esteemed, that even man, for whom it was made, and by whom it has its value, should yet be thought of less value than it is; so that a man of lead, who has no more sense than a log of wood, and is as bad as he is foolish, should have many wise and good men serving him, only because he had a great heap of that metal.'

To this day tolerance is far from being a general virtue. Persecution has indeed given up its halter and fagot, but it secretly blasts what it cannot openly destroy. In 'Nowhere,' however, it is lawful for every man to be of what faith he will. Each may propagate his creed by argument—never by violence or insult. Religion rests simply on nature and reason, finds its centre rather in the family than in the congregation, holds asceticism to be thanklessness, and bases its unity on the moral and spiritual cohesion of motives. If *Utopia* contains impracticable dreams of political organization, it also anticipates the views and improvements of the latest and wisest legislation. While in England half the population are unable to read, in 'Nowhere' every child is well taught. The aim of the laws is the comprehensive welfare of the labor-class as the true basis of a well-ordered commonwealth. Is it not true to-day that the civilized world, with its palaces, libraries, academies of science, and galleries of art, rests on the solid shoulders of farmers and mechanics? All the improvements in our criminal system are the *Utopian* conceptions of More, who insists, centrally, that the proper end of punishment is reformation, and that the most effective means of suppressing crime is prevention:

'If you allow your people to be badly taught, their morals to be corrupted from childhood, and then when they are men punish them for the very crimes to which they have been trained in childhood—what is this but first to make thieves, and then to punish them?'

Style.—Easy and flowing, without pedantry and without vulgarisms; rivalling in purity his great antagonist, Tyndale; so

graphic in description that many of the learned received the *Utopia* as a true history, and thought it expedient to send missionaries to that island for the conversion of so wise a people to Christianity; so buoyant in tone, that in the grave and sullen pages of polemics, it jests, smiles, rails, or drifts into ludicrous ribaldry; for, on questions of religious reform, More was a madman, and sarcasm was at any moment liable to pass into scurrility. Thus, of one Richard Mayfield, a monk and a priest, he says:

‘His holy life well declares his heresies, when, being both a priest and a monk, he went about two wives, one in Brabant, another in England. What he meant I cannot make you sure, whether he would be sure of the one if t’other should happen to refuse him; or that he would have them both, the one here, the other there; or else both in one place, the one because he was priest, the other because he was monk.’

Of a famous invective against the clergy, who, though only ‘a four hundredth part of the nation, held half the revenues,’ he writes:

‘And now we have this gosling with his “Supplication of Beggars.” He maketh his bill in the name of the beggars. The bill is conched as full of *lies* as the beggar swarmeth full of *lice*.’

He looked upon literature without humor, as a banquet without sauce; and, even in combating heresy, conceived it better ‘to tell his mind merrily than more solemnly to preach.’

Rank.—A scholar, a lawyer, a theologian, a wit, a politician without ambition, a lord-chancellor who entered and resigned his office poor, a sage whose wisdom lay concealed in his philosophical pleasantries, a theorist and a seer,—

‘Who could forerunn his age and race, and let
His feet millenniums hence be set
In midst of knowledge dreamed not yet’;

a martyr who laid his head upon the block, to seal his conscience with his blood; the most illustrious figure—save Wolsey—in the reign of Henry VIII; an author who missed the full immortality of his genius by the infelicity of his subjects, but whose massive folio remains a monument of our language in its pristine vigor; memorable as the first in prose to gauge the means of striking the attention, to study the art of arrangement and effect; hence, in the order of time, the first of our great English prose writers. The following letter to his children—in itself an admirable picture—shows an intellect grown capable of self-criticism, possessed of ideas and expressing them by superior reflection:

'The merchant of Bristow brought unto me your letters, the next day after he had received them of you; with the which I was exceedingly delighted. For there can come nothing, yea, though it were never so rude, never so meanly polished, from this your shop, but it procureth me more delight than any others' works, be they never so eloquent: your writing doth so stir up my affection towards you. But, excluding this, your letters may also very well please me for their own worth, being full of fine wit and of a pure Latin phrase: therefore none of them all but joyed me exceedingly. Yet, to tell you ingenuously what I think, my son John's letter pleased me best; both because it was longer than the other, as also for that he seemeth to have taken more pains than the rest. For he not only painteth out the matter decently, and speaketh elegantly; but he playeth also pleasantly with me, and returneth my jests upon me again, very wittily. Hereafter I expect every day letters from every one of you: neither will I accept of such excuses as you complain of; that you have no leisure, or that the carrier went away suddenly, or that you have no matter to write: John is not wont to allege any such thing. And how can you want matter of writing unto me, who am delighted to hear either of your studies or of your play; whom you may even then please exceedingly, when, having nothing to write of, you write as largely as you can of that nothing, than which nothing is more easy for you to do.

But this I admonish you to do; that, whether you write of serious matters or of trifles, you write with diligence and consideration, premeditating of it before. Neither will it be amiss, if you first indite it in English; for then it may more easily be translated into Latin, whilst the mind, free from inventing, is attentive to find apt and eloquent words. And, although I put this to your choice, whether you will do so or no, yet I enjoin you, by all means, that you diligently examine what you have written before you write it over fair again; first considering attentively the whole sentence, and after examine every part thereof; by which means you may easily find out if any solecisms have escaped you; which being put out, and your letter written fair, yet then let it not also trouble you to examine it over again; for sometimes the same faults creep in at the second writing, which you before had blotted out. By this your diligence you will procure, that those your trifles will seem serious matters. For, as nothing is so pleasing but may be made unsavory by prating garrulity, so nothing is by nature so unpleasant, that by industry may not be made full of grace and pleasantness. Farewell, my sweetest children.'

Character.—Of keen irregular features, gray restless eye, tumbled brown hair, careless gait and dress,—the outer pictures the inner man, cheerful, witty even to recklessness, kindly, half-sadly humorous, throwing the veil of laughter and of tears over the tender reverence of the soul. He married his first wife out of pure benevolence, thinking how much it would grieve her to see her younger sister, whom he loved the better, preferred before her. As his wife, it was his delight to train her in his own taste for letters and for music. Among his children, he was a loving companion and a wise teacher, luring them to the deeper studies by relics and curiosities gathered in his cabinet. Fond of their pets and their games as they themselves. He would take scholars and statesmen into his garden to see his girls' rabbits or watch the gambols of their favorite monkey. 'I have given you kisses enough,' he wrote them, 'but stripes hardly ever.' In conversation and writing, humor was his constitutional temper. At the most solemn moments of his life, he was facetious. In the

Tower, denied pen and ink, he writes to his daughter Margaret, and tells her, 'This letter is written with a coal'; but that, to express his love, a peck of coals would not suffice. Climbing the crazy timbers where he was to die, he said gaily to the lieutenant, 'I pray you see me safe up; and for my coming down, let me shift for myself.' When life and death were within a second of each other, he bade the executioner to stay his hand till he had removed his beard, observing, 'Pity that should be cut, which has never committed treason.' His fatalistic maxim was:

'If evils come not, then our fears are vain;
And if they do, fear but augments the pain.'

His character presents many opposite and, unhappily, some inconsistent qualities. Beneath his sunny nature lay a stern inflexibility of resolve. When he took office, it was with the open stipulation, 'first to look to God, and after God to the king.' He laughed at the superstition and asceticism of the day, yet every Friday scourged his body with whips of knotted cords, and by way of further penance wore his hair-shirt next to his lacerated skin. Once an opponent of abuses in the Church, when the Reformation was sprung, he went violently back to the extreme of maintaining the whole fabric of idolatry. Playful and affectionate in his own household, his abuses of power are a cloud on his memory. Free-thinker, as the bigots termed him, he appeals to miraculous relics as the evidences of his faith. In allusion to a napkin sent to King Abgarus, on which Jesus impressed the image of his own face, he says:

'And it hath been by like miracle in the thin corruptible cloth kept and preserved these 1500 years fresh and well preserved, to the inward comforts, spiritual rejoicing, and great increase of fervor, in the hearts of good Christian people.'

Theoretically opposed to sanguinary laws, he spared no pains to carry the most sanguinary into execution. He wished to have it engraved on his tombstone that he was '*Furibus, Homicidis, Hereticisque molestus*'—the scourge of Thieves, Murderers, and Heretics—the last being the greatest malefactors of the three.

Influence.—Viewed in active as in meditative life, in public as in private relations, the character, the events, and the works of this distinguished man will be always interesting and always instructive. Under his free and copious vein, the vernacular

idiom enlarged the compass of its expression. To him belongs the merit of having struck out, in advance of his age, and, as it afterward appeared, in advance of himself, a new path in literature,—that of political romances, wherein his successors—among them, Swift—were to be indebted largely to his reasoning and inventive talents. His antagonism to the Reformation could at most prove a transient evil, hardly appreciable, if so much as a retarding force. But the comprehensive dreams of the *Utopia* have haunted every nobler soul. Excellence is perpetual, and all of it exists in vision before it exists in fact. The *Utopia* has long afforded to conservatives a term of reproach applicable to all reformatory schemes and innovations. There is a large class of persons with whom the idea of making the world better and happier is ever regarded with distrust or contempt. He who entertains it is an unpractical dreamer. His project is straightway pronounced to be *Utopian*. Of which the moral, to the wise, is: Look kindly upon the ‘vagaries’ of the ‘dreamer’ and the ‘fanatic’; reflect that what was folly to our ancestors, is wisdom to us, and that another generation may successfully practice what we now reject as impossible or regard with an incredulous smile. The idealizing power of the race—I would have it engraved upon the living tablets of every human memory—is the most potent force of its development. A family of equals,—a community without want, without ignorance, without crime,—a church of righteousness,—a state where the intuitions of conscience have been codified into statutes,—are all possible, just as possible as cultivated America, jewelled all over with cities and fair towns, factories and schools, which no one would have dared to prophesy some hundred years ago. A steam-engine is only an opinion dressed in iron. A republic is but an idea worked out into men. The difference between a savage and an Angelo was once a power of progress. Desire only points to the reserve of power that one day shall satisfy it.

SIDNEY.

Warbler of poetic prose.—*Couper.*

Biography.—Of high birth, born in Kent, in 1554; at thirteen entered Oxford, where he won distinction as a scholar; at eighteen, without a degree, though trained in polite literature, began a tour of travel embracing France, Germany, and Italy; was in Paris during the massacre of St. Bartholomew; read Plato and Aristotle; studied Astronomy and Geometry at Venice; pondered over the Greek tragedies and the Italian sonnets; returned to England in his twenty-first year, a polished and accomplished man; instantly became a favorite of the Queen and the Court, where he shone as one of the most brilliant; at twenty-two, an ambassador for the promotion of a Protestant league among the princes of the Continent; at twenty-nine, married, and was knighted; two years later, was a candidate for the throne of Poland, but yielded to the remonstrance of Elizabeth, who feared to lose ‘the jewel of her times’; shortly after, a cavalry officer fighting in the cause of the Netherlands; mortally wounded in battle, he died on the 17th of October, 1586, lamented abroad, honored at home with a public funeral in the cathedral of St. Paul’s, while the whole nation went into mourning for their hero.

Writings.—Far from the glittering whirl of the Court, in the shelter of the forest oaks, Sidney wrote for his own and his sister’s amusement the *Arcadia*, a romance of love and chivalry, narrated in prose mixed with verse, in imitation of Italian models, with pastoral episodes, in the manner of the Spanish. Two princes, cousins, in quest of adventure, attached to each other in chivalrous fashion, are wrecked on the coast of Sparta, wander providentially and mysteriously into the kingdom of Arcadia, fall in love with the king’s two daughters, and, after passing through many severe trials, marry them, and are happy. You will find in it profusion of startling events and tragical or fantastic images,—shipwrecks, deliverances, surprises, abductions, pirates, wicked fairies, dancing shepherds, disguised princes, songs, allegories, sensuous beauties, tournaments of wit. It is less a monument than a relic, not more an image of the time than of the man, who had said: ‘It is a trifle; my young head

must be delivered.' In works of courtly taste and impassioned youth, look for excessive sentiment. A lover sends a letter to his love, and says to the ink:

'Therefore mourne boldly, my inke; for while shee lookes upon you, your blacknesse will shine: cry out boldly my lamentation; for while shee reades you, your cries will be musicke.'

Two young princesses have retired:

'They impoverished their clothes to enrich their bed, which for that night might well scorne the shrine of Venus; and there cherishing one another with deare, though chaste embracements; with sweet, though cold kisses; it might seeme that love was come to play him there without dart, or that wearie of his owne fires, he was there to refreshe himselfe between their sweet breathing lippes.'

It is, in part, the knightly desire of effect; in part, the exaggeration of inventive fire, confusing the story by endless digressions, and marring now and then idea, as well as expression, by unnatural refinements. Hence, the *Arcadia* is above the prose-level by its poetic genius, absorbing reveries, and tumultuous thoughts. So, it was long, and may still remain, the haunt of poets. Stately periods, luxuriant imagery, graceful fancies, natural freshness, piercing through the outward crust of affectation, withstanding the revolutions of times and tastes. For example:

'In the time that the morning did strew roses and violets in the heavenly floore against the coming of the sun, the nightingales (striving one with the other which could in most dainty varieties recount their wronge-caused sorrow) made them put off their sleep.'

Or the scenery of *Arcadia*:

'There were hills which garnished their proud heights with stately trees; humble valleys, whose base estate seemed comforted with the refreshing of silver rivers; meadows, enamelled with all sorts of eye-pleasing flowers; thickets, which being lined with most pleasant shade, were witnessed so to, by the cheerful disposition of many well-tuned birds; [each] pasture stored with sheep, feeding with sober security; while the pretty lambs, with bleating oratory, craved the dam's comfort; here a shepherd's boy piping, as though he should never be old; there a young shepherdess knitting, and withal singing; and it seemed that her voice comforted her hands to work, and her hands kept time to her voice-music.'

Growing Puritanism disparaged poetry, calling the poets of the age 'caterpillars of the commonwealth.' Sidney, therefore, as a knight battling for his lady, wrote, in heroic and splendid style, *The Defence of Poesy*. The conception is noble, the argument profound, the tone vehement and commanding. No art or science, he reasons, produces such invigorating moral effects; and it possesses this excellence by its superior creative power to dress and embellish nature. He says:

'Now, therein, of all sciences—I speak still of human, and according to the human conceit—is our poet the monarch. For he doth not only shew the way, but giveth so

sweet a prospect into the way, as will entice any man to enter into it. Nay, he doth, as if your journey should lie through a fair vineyard, at the very first give you a cluster of grapes; that, full of that taste, you may long to pass further. He beginneth not with obscure definitions; which must blur the margin with interpretations, and load the memory with doubtfulness; but he cometh to you with words set with delightful proportion, either accompanied with, or prepared for, the well-enchanted skill of music; and with a tale, forsooth, he cometh unto you, with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney-corner; and pretending no more, doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue; even as the child is often brought to take most wholesome things, by hiding them in such other as have a pleasant taste. So is it in men,—most of whom are childish in the best things, till they be cradled in their graves. Glad they will be to hear the tales of Hercules, Achilles, Cyrus, Æneas; and hearing them, must needs hear the right description of wisdom, valour, and justice; which, if they had been barely—that is to say, philosophically—set out, they would swear they be brought to school again.'

It was natural that a spirit so ardent and aspiring should feel and paint the sentiment in which all dreams converge—love. More beautiful than anything in the world were the eyes, lovelier still the soul, of Stella (star) who inspired his adoration:

'Stella, sovereign of my joy, . . .
 Stella, star of heavenly fire,
 Stella, load-star of desire,
 Stella, in whose shining eyes
 Are the lights of Cupid's skies. . . .
 Stella, whose voice when it speaks
 Senses all asunder breaks;
 Stella, whose voice when it singeth,
 Angels to acquaintance bringeth.'

To her, he, as Astrophel (lover of the star), addressed one hundred and eight sonnets, besides a number of songs; and in addition to these, wrote sixteen others, chiefly amatory. Some are artificial and cold; others, artless and warm: some forced and painful; others, simple and sweet. There is nothing conventional here—only the troubled heart, and the adored image of the absent, seen through worshipful tears:

'When I was forced from Stella ever dear—
 Stella, food of my thoughts, heart of my heart—
 Stella, whose eyes make all my tempests clear—
 By Stella's laws of duty to depart;
 Alas, I found that she with me did smart;
 I saw that tears did in her eyes appear:
 I saw that sighs her sweetest lips did part,
 And her sad words my sadden sense did hear.
 For me, I wept to see pearls scattered so:
 I sighed her sighs, and wailed for her woe;
 Yet swam in joy, such love in her was seen.
 Thus, while th' effect most bitter was to me,
 And nothing than the cause more sweet could be,
 I had been vexed, if vexed I had not been.'

And nothing gallant or far-fetched in this,—only real and noble feeling, told in changeful melody:

‘Stella, think not that I by verse seek fame,
Who seek, who hope, who love, who live but thee;
Thine eyes my pride, thy lips my history:
If thou praise not, all other praise is shame.
Nor so ambitious am I, as to frame
A nest for my young praise in lanrel tree:
In truth, I swear I wish not there should be
Graved in my epitaph a Poet’s name.
Nor, if I would, could I just title make,
That any laud thereof to me should grow,
Without my plumes from others’ wings I take:
For nothing from my wit or will doth flow,
Since all my words thy beauty doth endite,
And love doth hold my hand, and makes me write.’

What more genuine, free, and graceful than this invocation to exhausted nature’s ‘sweet restorer’?

‘Come, Sleep! O Sleep, the certain knot of peace,
The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe,
The poor man’s wealth, the prisoner’s release,
Th’ indifferent judge between the high and low;
With shield of proof shield me from out the press
Of those fierce darts Despair at me doth throw:
O make in me those civil wars to cease;
I will good tribute pay, if thou do so.
Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed,
A chamber deaf to noise and blind to light,
A rosy garland and a weary head:
And if these things, as being thine in right,
Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me,
Livelier than elsewhere, Stella’s image see.’

But there is a divine love which continues the earthly; a deathless beauty, a heavenly brightness, which fails not, and is the soul’s sovereign beatitude:

‘Leave me, O Love, which reachest but to dust;
And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things;
Grow rich in that which never taketh rust;
Whatever fades but fading pleasure brings.
Draw in thy beams, and humble all thy might
To that sweet yoke where lasting freedoms be;
Which breaks the clouds, and opens forth the light,
That doth both shine, and give us sight to see.
O take fast hold; let that light be thy guide
In this small course which birth draws out to death,
And think how ill becometh him to slide,
Who seeketh heaven, and comes of heavenly breath.
Then farewell, world; thy uttermost I see:
Eternal Love, maintain thy life in me!’

Style.—Always flexible and harmonious, usually decorated and luminous, but ever liable to youth’s unripeness and unequal-

ity; commonly easy and vigorous; occasionally running into trivial conceits and remote comparisons; now, stately or animated; now cramped or irksome; here direct, here overloaded, as of a nimble wit that must regard an object under all its forms, delighting in endless excursions, and perhaps somewhat too studious of display. The demand for what is fine in diction may easily degenerate into admiration of what is superfine. Sidney's style is not a little affected by the prevalent taste for *Euphuism*, in the use of which, however, he is almost always labored and unnatural. The following passage exhibits the artifice to uncommon advantage:

'The messenger made speed and found Argalus at a castle of his own, sitting in a parlor with his fair Parthenia, he reading in a book the stories of Hercules, she sitting by him as to hear him read; but while his eyes looked on the book, she looked in his eyes, sometimes staying him with some pretty question, not so much to be resolved of her doubt, as to give him occasion to look upon her. A happy couple! he joying in her, she joying in herself, but in herself, because she joyed in him; both increased their riches by giving to each other, each making one life double because they made a double life one. Where desire never wanted satisfaction, nor satisfaction ever bred satiety; he ruling because she would obey, or rather because she would obey, she therein ruling.'

Rank.—Less potent and comprehensive than other spirits of his age, but more beautiful and engaging than any; a combination of the scholar, the poet, and the knight-errant; a courtier petted and praised; a patriot who failed in ambition, though educated a statesman, because too fine an ornament of the nation to be spared for its defence; a lover who failed in love, marrying the woman he respected, and losing the one he adored; a soldier, a gentleman, and a gifted writer, whose vigor, variety, and idiom in prose mark a decided advance. Largely conspicuous in life, his merits are apt to be lost on the modern reader in consequence of their bedizened dress; for, though his thoughts were noble and his feelings genuine, his fancy was artificial, and tended incessantly to lift his rhetoric on stilts. He will always maintain, however, a high place as an æsthetic critic, nor an inconsiderable one as a sonneteer. Into what final mould his powers would have run, to what heights they might have attained, had they not been cut off so prematurely, is matter for speculation.

Character.—So rare a union of attractions is difficult of definition. 'He hath had,' was the simple testimonial of a friend, 'as great love in this life, and as many tears for his death, as ever any had.' His conception of chivalry—'high-erected

thoughts seated in a heart of courtesy'—is the fitting description of his own manliness, and the charm that made him the idol of court and camp. Scholarly, aspiring, brilliant, ingenuous, brave, and gentle. With a keen sense of pleasure and a thirst for adventure, he possessed a gravity beyond his years. Like most men of high sensibility, he inclined to melancholy and solitude. His chief fault—which was the impassioned energy of the age—was an impetuosity of temper, a trait which appears in the following letter addressed to his father's secretary, and containing what proved to be a groundless accusation:

'Mr. Molyneux—Few words are best. My letters to my father have come to the eyes of some. Neither can I condemn any but you for it. If it be so, you have played the very knave with me; and so I will make you know, if I have good proof of it. But that for so much as is past. For that is to come, I assure you before God, that if ever I know you do so much as read any letter I write to my father, without his commandment, or my consent, I will thrust my dagger into you. And trust to it, for I speak it in earnest. In the meantime, farewell.'

The closing scenes of his life display the crowning qualities of his character,—magnanimity and seriousness. On the field of carnage, mortally wounded, and perishing of thirst, a cup of water is brought to him; but as it touches his fevered lips he sees by his side a soldier still more desperately hurt, who is looking at the water with anguish in his face; and he says, 'Give it to this man; his necessity is yet greater than mine.' In his last moments, his chaplain—

'proved to him out of the Scriptures, that though his understanding and senses should fail, yet that faith which he had now could not fail; he did, with a cheerful and smiling countenance put forth his hand and slapped me softly on the cheeks. Not long after, he lifted up his eyes and hands, uttering these words, "I would not change my joy for the empire of the world." . . . Having made a comparison of God's grace now in him, his former virtues seemed to be nothing; for he wholly condemned his former life. "All things in it," he said, "have been vain, vain, vain."'

Influence.—A work so extensively perused as was the *Arcadia* must have contributed not a little to liberalize and dignify English speech, and to create, among writers, a bold and imaginative use of words. From him, as from a fountain, the most vigorous shoots of the period drew something of their verdure and their strength. Shakespeare was his attentive reader, copied his diction, transferred his ideas—above all, his fine conceptions of female character. Thus, in poetic prose of Sidney:

'More sweet than a gentle south-west wind, which comes creeping over flowery fields and shadowed waters in the extreme heat of summer.'

Said Shakespeare, after him:

‘Oh! it came o’er my ear like the sweet south,
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odor.’

And Coleridge:

‘And sweeter than the gentle south-west wind,
O’er willowy meads and shadowed waters creeping,
And Ceres’ golden fields.’

And Byron:

‘Breathing all gently o’er his cheek and mouth,
As o’er a bed of violets the sweet south.’

Nor is this all. The moral charm of his character wrought blessedly in life; and the noble feeling, the lofty aspiration, that lives in and exhales from the record of his heart and brain, is a part of the breath of human-kind, to nourish pastoral delight, pure friendship, and magnanimous thought.

HOOKER.

There is no learning that this man hath not searched into. . . . His books will get reverence from age.—*Pope Clement.*

Biography.—Born near Exeter, in 1553, of parents respectable, but neither noble nor rich, and abler to rejoice in his early piety than to appreciate his early intelligence. They designed him for a tailor, but to his humble schoolmaster he appeared ‘to be blessed with an inward divine light,’ and therefore at the age of fourteen, through the kindness of Bishop Jewel, was sent to Oxford, where he rose to eminence and preferment. After fourteen years of exhaustive study, he entered holy orders, was made deacon and priest, and married a scolding wife, whom he had allowed to be chosen for him by an ignorant low-minded matchmaker. In 1585, he was appointed Master of the Temple; but the situation neither accorded with his temper nor with his literary pursuits, and he petitioned his superior to remove him to ‘some quiet parsonage.’ The following is the appeal:

‘My Lord,—When I lost the freedom of my cell, which was my college, yet I found some degree of it in my quiet country parsonage. But I am weary of the noise and oppositions of this place; and, indeed, God and nature did not intend me for contentions, but for study and quietness. And, my lord, my particular contests here with Mr. Travers have

proved the more unpleasant to me, because I believe him to be a good man; and that belief hath occasioned me to examine mine own conscience concerning his opinions. And to satisfy that I have consulted the holy Scripture, and other laws, both human and divine, whether the conscience of him and others of his judgment ought to be so far complied with by us as to alter our frame of church-government, our manner of God's worship, our praising and praying to Him, and our established ceremonies, as often as their tender consciences shall require us. And in this examination I have not only satisfied myself, but have begun a treatise in which I intend the satisfaction of others, by a demonstration of the reasonableness of our laws of ecclesiastical polity. But, my lord, I shall never be able to finish what I have begun, unless I be removed into some quiet parsonage, where I may see God's blessings spring out of my mother-earth, and eat my own bread in peace and privacy; a place where I may, without disturbance, meditate my approaching mortality, and that great account which all flesh must give at the last day to the God of all spirits.'

First appointed to a parish in Wiltshire, he was in the following year presented to a rectory in Kent, where the remainder of his life was spent in meditation and the faithful discharge of his duties. Never strong, he died in November, 1600, of pulmonic disease induced by a heavy cold.

Writings.—Against the non-conforming Puritans, Hooker, in *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, undertook to investigate and define the right of the Church to claim obedience from its members, and the duty of the members to render obedience to the Church. His opponents insisted that a definite scheme of church polity was revealed in the Bible, thus reducing the controversy to a mere anarchy of opinions about the meaning of certain texts. With that aching for order and that demand for fundamental ideas which characterize a tranquil spirit and a great mind, he founded his argument on general conceptions, and urged that the laws of nature, reason, and society, equally with those of Scripture, are of divine institution. Both are equally worthy of respect. It is the province of the 'natural light' to distinguish between what is variable and what is invariable in these laws, between what is *eternal* and what is *temporary* in Revelation itself. Hence the divinely constituted reason of man does not exceed its rights in establishing certain uniformities and ceremonials on which Scripture may be doubtful or silent. The English Church system may be conformable to the will of God, though not enjoined by any clear text of his revealed Word.

What was transitory or what was partial in the book may be subtracted without injury to its immortal excellence; for its foundations are laid deep in the eternal verities which are the basis of all duties and all rights, political as well as religious.

Its central idea is *law*, as apprehended by reason, which in its essential nature is one with the self-conscious infinite reason at the heart of things. 'May we,' he indignantly asks, 'cause our faith without Reason to appear reasonable in the eyes of men?' And of this uncreated Law which sustains the fabric of the universe, and weds obligation to ecstasy, he says in language touched by a consecrating radiance:

'Wherefore, that here we may briefly end: of law there can be no less acknowledged, than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world: all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power; both angels and men and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and their joy.'

Style.—Methodical, correct, ample, massive, and grand; idiomatic without vulgarity, and learned without pedantry. The Latin order of arrangement was with Hooker, as with all the translators of the period, a favorite construction. For example: 'Brought already we are even to that estate'; 'able we are not to deny, but that we have deserved the hatred of the heathen.' Often it is used with powerful effect, giving to the capital images the emphatic positions; as, 'Dangerous it were for the feeble brain of man to wade far into the doings of the Most High.' Some of his periods are cumbrous and intricate, but in general they roll melodiously on, with the serene might of the soul that inspires and moves them, rich in imagery and noble in diction.

Rank.—By universal consent, one of the great in English letters. A learned divine without fanaticism. A persuasive logician, from the chain of whose reasoning it is hard to detach a link, without a fracture. A philosopher whose breadth and power of mind are shown not only in the conception and application of one majestic principle, but in the exhibition of many principles harmoniously related. None before him had his grasp and largeness; few after him have been so comprehensive. As he was one of the loftiest of thinkers, so he was one of the most practical. The idea that shone in the heaven of contemplation, radiated in a thousand directions on the earth. Worthy to be regarded not only as one of the fathers of the English Church, but as one of the chief founders of English prose. It was said by a contemporary Romanist that he had never read an English

book whose writer deserved the name of author till he read the first four books of 'a poor obscure English priest' on Laws and Church Polity; a judgment which points at least to the fact that the 'obscure priest' is the original of what deserves to be called English literature, in its theological and philosophical domain.

Character.—Grave, mild, modest, and devout; in youth ardently studious, and in manhood conspicuous equally for learning and for eloquence. As a schoolboy he was remarkable for his continual questioning, but his inquisitive intellect was accompanied with docility of disposition, and the happy teacher spared no efforts to advance the little wonder. His body was feeble, his soul capacious. He suffered much, yet was without fretful or morbid quality, resolved, like Socrates, to make a noble use of racking pains and sordid annoyances. It was in this enlightened and tolerant spirit that he bore the perpetual cross of union with a female of vulgar manners, of unprepossessing face, of snappish and tyrannizing temper. A London hostess, on the occasion of his appointment to preach a sermon at Paul's Cross, had opportunely cured him of a cold. He was easily persuaded that his constitutional delicacy required a perpetual nurse. Her benevolence not stopping here, she offered to provide such a one; and he, in an excess of gratitude, promised to marry her choice. On his next arrival, the artful woman presented her daughter, and the guileless Hooker, the thinker and scholar, the man of innocent wisdom, who would have a nurse-wife, got a shrew. She preferred the more natural office of vixen. When visited, about a year afterwards, by two of his former pupils, he was found tending a flock of sheep, with a copy of Horace in his hand. In the house, they received no entertainment but his conversation, which Mrs. Hooker interrupted by calling him sharply to come and rock the cradle; for she would have it understood that her husband was her servant, and that his friends were unwelcome guests. Cranmer, in taking leave, said:

'Good tutor, I am sorry that your lot is fallen in no better ground as to your parsonage; and more sorry that your wife proves not a more comfortable companion after you have wearied yourself in your restless studies.'

To which Hooker made the characteristic answer:

'My dear George, if saints have usually a double share in the miseries of this life, I, that am none, ought not to repine at what my wise Creator hath appointed for me, but labor—as indeed I do daily—to submit mine to His will, and possess my soul in patience and peace.'

His intelligence was essentially moral; and, by the alchemy of his rare spirit, all knowledge and experience were transmuted into celestialized reason.

Influence.—To Hooker belongs the merit of first fully developing the English language as a vehicle of refined and philosophic thought. His work is monumental. It is still referred to as a great authority upon the whole range of moral and political principles. The beauty of his daily life was an agency to create new beauty everywhere. We can believe that it left its impress even upon his wife. A man of noble piety is in a community like a flower that fills the whole house with its fragrance; and the children born there a hundred years later are better born than elsewhere, because that man spread the sweetness of his character there, and uplifted the vulgar when they knew it not.

Above all, Hooker introduced into polemics a new spirit and method—philosophical rather than theological. Against the dogmatism of creed he set the authority of reason, to which he gave so large a place that never, even to this day, has it made a similar advance. It is not difficult to see the immense importance of this change,—a change of which, indeed, he is the representative and reactionary rather than the initial and efficient cause. As long as an opinion was defended by the dogmatic method, whoever assailed it incurred the imputation of heresy, and it was easy to justify his persecution; but when it was chiefly defended by human reason, which leads the ablest minds to the most opposite conclusions, the element of uncertainty entered, and punishment was felt to be wrong when it was seen that the persecuted *might* be right.

RALEIGH.

A great but ill-regulated mind.—*Hume*.

Biography.—Born in Devonshire, in 1552, the younger son of a family richer in ancient lineage than in patrimony; entered Oxford, but quit it shortly for active life, with no resource but

his enterprise and his sword; at seventeen a valorous leader in the Protestant cause of France, subsequently in the Netherlands, then in Ireland; from the art of war, turned to the art of navigation, which had led Columbus to discovery and Pizarro to conquest; planned an expedition to North America; planted colonies in the wilds to which the royal maiden had eagerly given the name of *Virginia*, but failed, the colonists returning with tobacco and potatoes instead of diamonds and gold; rose to a favorite of the Queen, was knighted, was her chief adviser in the Spanish invasion of the Armada, was active in its destruction and serviceable in Parliament; a courtier commanding the Queen's guard, riding abroad with her in his suit of solid silver, or attending the Court in dress gorgeous with jewels, from the huge diamond which buttoned his feather to his shoes powdered with pearls; intrigued with a maid of honor, and lost the favor which had been the pride of his ambition; married the maid, and was imprisoned with his wife in the Tower; counterfeited the most romantic despair at the Queen's displeasure, and obtained his freedom, but was banished the presence; thought to dazzle her imagination, and went in quest of the El Dorado, fabled to be in the interior of South America, where the sands glistened, the rocks shone, and the houses were roofed, with the precious metal; returned, and wrote:

'Of the little remaining fortune I had, I have wasted in effect all herein. I have undergone many constructions, been accompanied with many sorrows, with labor, hunger, heat, sickness, and peril. From myself I have deserved no thanks; for I am returned a beggar, and withered.'

Restored to the favor of his mistress-sovereign by the brilliancy of his maritime enterprise, he was discountenanced by James I, whose mind had been poisoned by a malignant rival; was tried on a charge of treason, condemned, but reprieved, and instead of being executed was committed to the Tower, where he was confined for twelve years, during six of which his wife was permitted to bear him company; tempted the cupidity of the king by the vision of a gold-mine and a new empire in Guiana; offered to equip a fleet for the adventure, and was released but not pardoned; burned a Spanish town, got nothing of value, was forced to return a baffled dreamer, under the imputations of falsehood and treachery; and to satisfy the implacable Spaniards, was

executed, in 1618, on the old sentence, which had been suspended over his head like the pointed sword.

Writings.—His prison-hours were made memorable by the composition in his cell of the *History of the World*. He begins with the Creator and the creation; discusses fate, fore-knowledge, and free-will, the site of Paradise, the travels of Cain; the several floods, whose dates are pretty certain; Noah's Ark, which is proved, with prodigious labor, *not* to have rested on Ararat; descends, through sacred story, to the annals of Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome; closing with the fall of the Macedonian Empire, B.C. 170; and infusing into his voluminous scroll of four thousand years the foolish and the wise sayings of Pagan and Christian philosophers and poets, dissertations on the origin of law and government, digressions on slavery, on idolatry, on art, all the fables that were believed by the learned and the unlearned alike, all that his own eyes had observed in the old and the new worlds, and whatever the peculiar studies of each individual in his cultured circle could afford. Whoever can have patience to wade through the first half of the book, will find, when he reaches the second, that his pains are not unrewarded. In its versatile pages are eloquent and stirring passages, embodying the grave and grand idea of death as the issue throughout—oblivion, dust, and endless darkness. Thus:

'We have left Rome flourishing in the middle of the field, having rooted up or cut down all that kept it from the eyes and admiration of the world. But, after some continuance, it shall begin to lose the beauty it had; the storms of ambition shall beat her great boughs and branches one against another; her leaves shall fall off, her limbs wither, and a rabble of barbarous nations enter the field and cut her down.'

Again:

'If we seek a reason of the succession and continuance of this boundless ambition in mortal men, we may add to that which hath been already said, that the kings and princes of the world have always laid before them the actions but not the ends of those great ones which preceded them. They are always transported with the glory of the one, but they never mind the misery of the other, till they find the experience in themselves. They neglect the advice of God, while they enjoy life or hope it; but they follow the counsel of death upon his first approach. It is he that puts into man all the wisdom of the world, without speaking a word, which God, with all the words of His law, promises, or threats, doth not infuse. Death, which hateth and destroyeth man, is believed; God, which hath made him and loves him, is always deferred. . . . It is Death alone that can suddenly make man to know himself. He tells the proud and insolent that they are but abjects, and humbles them at the instant, makes them cry, complain, and repent, yea, even to hate their forepast happiness. He takes the account of the rich, and proves him a beggar, a naked beggar, which hath interest in nothing but the gravel that fills his mouth. He holds a glass before the eyes of the most beautiful, and makes them see therein their deformity and rottenness, and they acknowledge it.'

This was his great literary work; but his miscellaneous writings are so various that they have been classed under the heads of poetical, epistolary, military, maritime, geographical, political, philosophical, and historical. It was one of his intentions to write an English epic; but his busy life allowed him leisure only for some scattered and fragmentary efforts. These, however, are affluent of grace and tenderness, depth of sentiment and strength of imagination. Thus:

'Passions are likened best to floods and streams;
The shallow murmur, but the deep are dumb;
So, when affections yield discourse, it seems
The bottom is but shallow whence they come.
They that are rich in words, in words discover
That they are poor in that which makes a lover.'

Or his reply to Marlowe's *Passionate Shepherd*:

'If all the world and love were young,
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
These pretty pleasures might me move
To live with thee and be thy love.

But time drives flocks from field to fold,
When rivers rage and rocks grow cold;
And Philomel becometh dumb;
The rest complains of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields
To wayward winter reckoning yields:
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,
Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy bed of roses,
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies,
Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten,—
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw and ivy buds,
Thy coral clasps and amber studs,—
All those in me no means can move
To come to thee and be thy love.

But could youth last, and love still breed;
Had joys no date, nor age no need;
Then those delights my mind might move
To live with thee and be thy love.'

Or the justness of moral perception in the couplet, profoundly true:

'Of death and judgment, heaven and hell,
Who oft doth think, must needs die well.'

And the noble pathos of the *Soul's Errand*:

'Go, Soul, the body's guest,
Upon a thankless errand:
Fear not to touch the best:
The truth shall be thy warrant:

Go, since I needs must die,
And give the world the lie. . . .
Tell zeal it wants devotion:
Tell love it is but lust;

Tell time it is but motion;	Tell fortune of her blindness;
Tell flesh it is but dust; . . .	Tell nature of decay;
Tell age it daily wasteth;	Tell friendship of unkindness;
Tell honour how it alters;	Tell justice of delay:
Tell beauty how she blasteth;	And if they will reply,
Tell favour how it falters. . . .	Then give them all the lie.'

Style.—Easy, vigorous, elevated, as a whole; seldom low, never affected; often ornate, with an antique richness of imagery; showing, when most careful, the artificial structure of Sidney and Hooker. In poetry, simple, sweet, melodious and strong. Spenser called him 'the summer's nightingale.'

Rank.—In that brilliant constellation of the great which adorned his period, one of the most distinguished of those who added eminence in letters to eminence in action. Conspicuous in an era prodigal of genius, as a soldier, a statesman, a navigator, and a writer, a valorous knight, and the most splendid of adventurers. An orator whom the Queen, we are told, 'took for a kind of oracle.' An experimentalist in natural phenomena, seeking the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life. In political economy, he anticipated the modern doctrine of Free Trade; in metaphysics, Stewart's fundamental laws of human belief. He is the pioneer in the department of dignified historical writing, and, could he have tamed the wild fire of his erratic dreams, would have won a foremost place among the famous poets of his day.

Character.—A genius versatile as ambitious. What strikes us most forcibly is his restless and capacious intellect,—his various efficiency, and his prompt aptitude for whatever absorbed him at the moment; his superabundant physical and mental vitality, which displays itself equally in literature and in action. Haughty in prosperity, base in humiliation. With vision of the moral heights, he could creep in crooked politics, or intrigue in dark labyrinths, and was an adept in the arts of bribery and of flattery. It was thus, when a prisoner for his love-treason, that he gallantly raved of the Queen, aged sixty:

'I was wont to behold her riding like Alexander, hunting like Diana, walking like Venus; the gentle wind blowing her fair hair about her pure cheeks like a nymph; sometime sitting in the shade like a goddess, sometime singing like an angel.'

His principal defect, even when his ends were patriotic and noble, was unscrupulousness as to the means. But we will re-

member that, with boundless desires, he was thrown from the first upon his own resources. He was in a sense to be the architect of his own destinies, and was in a measure to be the creature of circumstances. It was his fate to make headway through subtle and plotting factions.

A courtier holding 'the glass of fashion,' a daring child of fortune, he was also a recluse thinker, equally renowned for his contemplative and his active powers. It was in misfortune, after all, that his noble self was asserted,—never more grandly than when, the night before he was beheaded, he wrote:

'Even such is time, that takes in trust
Our youth, our joys, our all we have,
And pays us but with earth and dust;
Who, in the dark and silent grave,
When we have wandered all our ways,
Shuts up the story of our days;
But from this earth, this grave, this dust,
My God shall raise me up, I trust!'

His wits were, on all occasions, equal to his reputation. 'Traitor, monster, viper, spider of hell!' cried the Attorney-General, 'I want words to express thy viperous treasons.'—'True,' said Raleigh quietly, 'for you have spoken the same thing half a dozen times over already.' Dauntless in life, reflection had taught him how to die. On the scaffold, after vindicating his conduct in a manly speech to the spectators, he desired to see the axe. When the headsman hesitated, he said: 'I pray thee, let me see it; dost thou think that I am afraid of it?'—As he ran his fingers over its keen edge, he smilingly remarked: 'This is a sharp medicine, but it will cure all diseases.' When he had extended himself for the stroke, he was requested to turn his head. 'So the heart be right,' he replied, 'it is no matter which way the head lieth.' When he had forgiven the executioner and had prayed, the signal was made, which not being followed immediately by the stroke, he said: 'Why dost thou not strike? Strike, man!'

Influence.—He contributed to that passion for adventure and discovery which gave at this period an unusual impetus to the mind of man. His exploring captains discovered a virgin soil—Virginia. His attempts at colonization were indeed fruitless in their ostensible aim, but were instrumental to others more successful and permanent; just as this man plays with the light-

ning and brings nothing to pass, while his son after him flashes intelligence through the air. Through the gratitude of later times, less for what he did than for what he strove to do, Raleigh—the capital of North Carolina—preserves his romantic name. He formed the famous Mermaid Club—oldest of its kind—where Shakespeare brought to the feast of wit the brightness of his fancy, and Jonson his sarcastic humor. He projected an office of universal agency, and thus forecast that useful information which we now recognize by the term of advertisement. He joyed to pay the homage of his protection to Spenser, and the severe Milton carefully collected his maxims and his counsels. And so this restless spirit, who seemed, in his ceaseless occupations, to have lived only for his own age and his own pleasure, was the true servant of posterity, who hail him as also one of the founders of literature. Had his life been devoted to letters instead of a variety of pursuits, his success would have been brilliant and lasting; his writings, no longer now a living force, would have been a perennial power. A universal genius is not likely to reach eminent and enduring excellence in anything. The beams of a thousand suns will not fire the softest piece of timber when radiating freely. Unity of effort—a gathering of the soul's energies—a limitation of the field of exertion—is essential to glorious achievement. This shifting, various career suggests a second truth for the education of character,—that inattention to the outer world promotes attention to the inner; that the circumstance which sunders the mind from external things, impels it inward, from the life of sensation to the life of reflection. It was through the Traitor's Gate that our hero passed to a tranquillity and thoughtfulness impossible outside. Within the sombre walls of the Tower shone the celestial light. When the body is imprisoned, the soul may be most free.

'Then like a bird, it sits and sings,
Then whets and claps its silver wings,
And till prepared for longer flight,
Waves in its plumes the various light.'

SPENSER.

Who, like a copious river, pour'd his song
O'er all the mazes of enchanted ground.—*Thomson.*

We must not fear to assert, with the best judges of this and former ages, that Spenser is still the third name in the poetical literature of our country, and that he has not been surpassed, except by Dante, in any other.—*Hallam.*

Biography.—Born in London in 1552; his parents poor but of ancient fame; educated at Cambridge, where he imbued himself with the noblest philosophies; quit the university to live as a tutor in the North, where in obscure poverty he passed through a deep and unfortunate passion; driven again southward by the scorn of the fair 'Rosalind'; wanted to dream, and sought, with ceaseless importunity, the patronage of wealth, that he might live in the free indulgence of his tastes; was sent as an envoy to France; was a guest of the chivalrous Sidney, in the castle where the *Arcadia* was produced; gained the favor of the Queen, but obtained only inferior employment; went to Ireland as a private secretary; there remained, with appointments more honorable than lucrative, on a grant of forfeited estate, in a lonely castle, from which the view embraced a beautiful lake, an amphitheatre of mountains, and three thousand acres of barren solitude; received a visit from Raleigh, who—

"Gan to cast great liking to my lore,
And great disliking to my luckless lot,
That banished had myself, like wight forlorn,
Into that waste where I was quite forgot";

was created poet laureate, and decreed a pension of fifty pounds; visited England at intervals to publish poems, or to find a situation in his native home, still the persistent court-suitor moving round the interminable circle of 'hope deferred'; tells us how on a summer's day,—

"I, whose sullen care,
Through discontent of my long fruitless stay
In princes' court, and expectation vain
Of idle hopes which still do fly away,
Like empty shadows, did afflict my brain,
Walked forth, to ease my pain,
Along the shore of silver-streaming Thames";

banished, as he said, to his undesired and savage locality as often as he sued to leave it, whence a rebellion expelled him, after his

house and youngest child had been burned by the insurgents; died three months later, in 1599, in obscure lodgings, of misery and a broken heart; buried, close by Chaucer, in Westminster Abbey. Poets held his pall, and cast their elegies into his grave.

Appearance.—Face long and somewhat spare, beard closely shaven, moustache full and arching, nose of the Grecian type, forehead well-formed, hair short and curling, eyebrows heavy, eyelids drooping, eyes thoughtful and dreamy, lips full enough to denote feeling, firm enough to prevent its riotous overflow. To the commonplace gossips, he was only ‘a little man who wore short hair, little bands, and little cuffs.’

Writings.—As on an inexhaustible, many-winding stream, whose end is never reached, Spenser floated, many a summer’s day, adown the gently-flowing vision of the *Fairy Queen*. To please the Court, the scene is laid in contemporary England, and includes all the leading personages of the day under the veil of knights and their squires and lady-loves:

‘Of Faery Land yet if he more inquire,
By certain signs, here set in sundry places,
He may it find; . . .
And thou, O fairest princess under sky,
In this fair mirror mayst behold thy face
And thine own realms in land of Faery.’

To please posterity, to suit this wider and higher application of his plan, the characters double their parts, and appear as the impersonations of moral attributes. He says:

‘I have undertaken to represent all the moral virtues, assigning to every virtue a knight to be the patron and defender of the same; in whose actions and feats of arms the operations of that virtue whereof he is the protector are to be expressed, and the vices and unruly appetites that oppose themselves against the same, to be beaten down and overcome.’

To each of the twelve virtues, each embodied in a representative patron, was to be devoted a book of twelve cantos; this, if well received, to be followed by the exposition of twelve others, the guardians of public faith. In the dedication to Raleigh, he tells us that ‘the general end of the book is to fashion a gentleman . . . in virtuous and gentle discipline.’ And in the person of the Fairy herself, he informs us: ‘I mean *glory* in my general intention, but in my particular, I conceive the most excellent and

glorious person of our sovereign, the *queen*.' In the legendary Arthur, the sun of the whole knightly company, man was to be seen perfected, in his longing and progress toward the Fairy Queen, the divine excellence which is the true end of human effort. Thus the poem may be characterized, in its intent, as a dream of idealism, a poem of the human soul struggling towards the perfect love, which is God, and towards the perfect beauty, which consists not in harmony of color and form, but in the deathless idea which shines through them. Its true scene is not material but mental space, the world of picture and illusion, in which the actual is idealized and the ideal is real. In this enchanted region two worlds are harmonized—the beauty of energy and the beauty of happiness, Christian chivalry and pagan Olympus, mediæval romance and classical mythology; the second imaginary, the first shadowy, both poetic; each, in some sort, a mutilated copy or suggestion of invisible forces and ideas—the heaven of Plato. At this elevation, fancy loses itself, invention overflows, apparitions abound, phrases are expanded into periods, objects are traced with lingering, infinite detail. A wounded giant falls—

‘As an aged tree,
High growing on the top of rocky clift,
Whose heart-strings with keen steel nigh hewen be,
The mighty trunk half rent with ragged rift,
Doth roll adown the rocks, and fall with fearful drift.
Or as a castle, reared high and round,
By subtle engines and malicious slight
Is undermined from the lowest ground,
And her foundation forced, and feebled quite,
At last down falls; and, with her heaped height,
Her hasty ruin does more heavy make,
And yields itself unto the victor’s might.’

All this, because the dream is pleasant, and the dreamer loves to see the living and changing figures rise and display themselves incessantly. Now consider the vastness of the design, which, when completed, was to comprise not less than a hundred thousand verses. What result? Only six books completed,—allegories of *Holiness*, *Temperance*, *Chastity*, *Friendship*, *Justice*, and *Courtesy*, which, however, form one of the longest poems in existence; no movement of the whole; like a train whose large-orbed wheels spin pleasantly without progress; fancy strays, the thread is lost in an ecstacy of adornment; features blend, positions and exploits reappear, imagery fails, and the first book sur-

passes all the others in consistency and splendor; in fact, six separate poems, in which the action diverges, then converges, becomes confused, then starts again; each combining the imaginings of antiquity and the middle age, fair, terrible, and fantastic; a series of airy shapes that waver and are gone; a phantasmagoria, one part allegory and nine parts beauty; while in, under, and over all is a sublime spirituality, the heaven without rent or seam, where no ache or sorrow of spirit can enter, the extreme verge where the realm of mind and the realm of sense unite,—the everlasting Ought and Possible of human life.

The reader will perceive the impossibility of giving the plot in full, if plot it may be called,—

‘That shape has none,
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb.’

The true use of these magical pages is as of a noble gallery of art, which, without stopping long enough to cloy his perceptions, one visits to forget himself, for solace and delight, to wonder, to admire, to dream, to be happy, and by that experience, to refine and sweeten his tastes,—

‘Lifting himself out of the lowly dust
On golden plumes up to the purest sky.’

Was never invention more prodigal and brilliant,—on earth a pilgrim, its home on the celestial mountains. Here, in a description of the House of Morpheus, is a suggestion of its endless grace, dreaming pleasure, and picturesque play:

*‘A little lowly hermitage it was
Down in a dale, hard by a forest’s side,
Far from resort of people that did pass
In travel to and fro: a little wide
There was a holy chapel edified,
Wherein the hermit duly wont to say
His holy things each morn and eventide;
Thereby a crystal stream did gently play
Which from a sacred fountain welled forth away.*

Arrived there the little house they fill,
Nor look for entertainment where none was.
Rest is their feast, and all things at their will.
The noblest mind the best contentment has.
With fair discourse the evening so they pass,
For that old man of pleasing words had store,
And well could file his tongue as smooth as glass:
He told of saints and hopes, and evermore
He strew’d an Ave Mary, after and before.

And drooping night thus creepeth on them fast;
And the sad humour, loading their eye-lids,

As messenger of Morpheus, on them cast
 Sweet slumbering dew; the which to sleep them bids;
 Unto their lodgings then his guests he rids;
 Where, when all drown'd in deadly sleep he finds,
 He to his study goes, and there amidst
 His magic books and arts of sundry kinds,
He seeks out mighty charms to trouble sleepy minds. . . .

And forth he call'd out of deep darkness dread
 Legions of sprites, the which, like little flies,
Fluttering about his ever damned head,
 Await whereto their service he applies,
 To aid his friends, or fray his enemies;
 Of those he chose out two, the falsest two
 And fittest for to forge true seeming lies;
 The one of them he gave a message to,
 The other by himself staid other work to do.

He maketh speedy way through spersed air,
And through the world of waters wide and deep,
 To Morpheus' house doth hastily repair.
 Amid the bowels of the earth full steep,
 And low, where dawning day doth never peep,
 His dwelling is; *there Tethys his wet bed*
Doth ever wash, and Cynthia still doth steep
 In silver dew his ever-drooping head,
 While sad night over him her mantle black doth spread.

Whose double gates he findeth locked fast;
 The one fair fram'd of burnished ivory,
 The other all with silver overcast;
 And wakeful dogs before them *far do lie,*
 Watching to banish Care their enemy,
 Who oft is wont to trouble gentle Sleep;
 By them the sprite doth pass in quietly
 And unto Morpheus comes, whom drowned deep
 In drowsy fit he finds; of nothing he takes keep.

And more to lull him in his slumber soft,
A trickling stream, from high rock tumbling down,
And ever drizzling rain upon the loft,
Mix'd with a murmuring wind, much like the soun
Of swarming bees, did cast him in a swoon:
No other noise, nor people's troublous cries,
As still are wont to annoy the walled town,
Might there be heard; but careless Quiet lies,
Wrapt in eternal silence, far from enemies.'

In the paradise of devices, you are unconscious of the sentiment, and when reminded of it, prefer to forget it. You may be told that Archimago, a hypocritical magician (Hypocrisy) lures, because he cannot be detected, Una (Truth) and the Red-cross Knight (Holiness) into his abode; that, while they are asleep, he sends to Morpheus (the god Sleep) for a false dream to produce discord between them; but you are disenchanted, and choose rather the condition of reverie, the gentle sway of the

measure that floats you lullingy from scene to scene. The delight of the eyes is, for once, finer than the instruction of the understanding. The images, in their ideal life, are more potent as poetry, living beings and actions, than as symbols investing a theology.

With this ever-flowing fertility of inspiration, there is no perplexity, no haze. Every object is defined, complete, separate. If it moves a thousand leagues from the actual, so do we, and are not the less interested, because it is not flesh and blood. It is something better, something beyond the importunate trifles which we gravely call realities, something of that to-morrow, always coming and never come, where thought and fancy are free. We take pleasure in its brilliancy or its bravery, without regard to whether it be substantial. We are upborne by association, and grow credulous and happy by contagion. When Sir Guyon is led by the tempter Mammon in the subterranean realm, through caverns, unknown abysses, across wonderful gardens, by glittering palaces, trees laden with golden fruits, we follow, see behind us the ugly Fiend, with monstrous gait, ready to devour us on the least show of covetousness, and enter the infernal edifice, where hideous figures are outlined in the darksome depths, and the shining metal lights up the shadowy horror:

‘That house’s form within was rude and strong,
Like a huge cave hewn out of rocky clift,
*From whose rough vault the ragged branches hung,
Emboist with massy gold of glorious gift,
And with rich metal loaded every rift,
That heavy ruin they did seem to threat;
And over them Arachne high did lift
Her cunning web, and spread her subtle net,
Enwrapped in foul smoke, and clouds more black than jet.*

*Both roof and floor, and walls were all of gold,
But overgrown with dust and old decay
And hid in darkness, that none could behold
T’hue thereof; for view of cheerful day,
Did never in that house itself display,
But a faint shadow of uncertain light;
Such as a lamp, whose life does fade away;
Or as the moon, clothed with cloudy night,
Does show to him that walks in fear and sad affright.*

In all that room was nothing to be seen,
But huge great iron chests and coffers strong,
All barr’d with double bands, that none could ween
Them to enforce by violence or wrong:
On every side they placed were along;

But all the ground with skulls was scattered,
 And dead men's bones, which round about were flung,
 Whose lives (it seemed) whilome there were shed,
 And their vile carcasses now left unburied.'

The train of scenery never ends. Guyon (Temperance) after the test of gold, is tried by that of pleasure. Side by side with the gloomy vaults and the swarming fiends are the happy gardens:

'And in the midst of all a fountain stood
 Of richest substance that on earth might be,
 So pure and shiny that the crystal flood
 Through every channel running one might see;
 Most goodly it with curious imagery
 Was overwrought, and shapes of naked boys,
 Of which some seemed with lively jollity
 To fly about, playing their wanton toys,
 Whilst others did themselves embay in liquid joys.

And over all, of purest gold was spread
 A trail of ivy in his native hue;
 For the rich metal was so colored
 That he who did not well advised it view
 Would surely deem it to be ivy true;
 Low his lascivious arms adown did creep
 That themselves dipping in the silver dew
 Their fleecy flowers they tenderly did steep,
 Which drops of crystal seemed for wantonness to weep.

Infinite streams continually did well
 Out of this fountain, sweet and fair to see,
 The which into an ample laver fell,
 And shortly grew to so great quantity
 That like a little lake it seemed to be
 Whose depth exceeded not three cubits' height,
 That through the waves one might the bottom see
 All paved beneath with jasper shining bright,
 That seemed the fountain in that sea did sail upright. . .

Eftsoones they heard a most melodious sound,
 Of all that mote delight a dainty ear,
 Such as at once might not on living ground,
 Save in this paradise, be heard elsewhere:
 Right hard it was for wight which did it hear
 To read what manner music that mote be;
 For all that pleasing is to living ear
 Was there consorted in one harmony:
 Birds, voices, instruments, winds, waters, all agree.

The joyous birds, shrouded in cheerful shade,
 Their notes unto the voice attempered sweet;
 The angelical, soft, trembling voices made
 To the instruments divine response mete;
 The silver-sounding instruments did meet
 With the base murmur of the water's fall;
 The water's fall with difference discreet,
 Now soft, now loud, unto the wind did call;
 The gentle, warbling wind low answered to all.'

Never was poetry more luxuriant and pictorial. Never was more of that subtler spirit of the art, which painting can not express—thoughts beyond the visible proof of the canvas. This man was a colorist and an architect, equally of the graceful and the terrible. Had he not been himself, he would have been a Rubens or a Raphael. Pride, in the throne chamber of her palace, built over human carcasses, is thus described:

‘So prond she shone in her princely state,
Looking to heaven, for earth she did disdain,
And sitting high, for lowly she did hate:
Lo! underneath her scornful feet was lain
A dreadful Dragon with an hideous train;
And in her hand she held a mirror bright,
Wherein her face she often viewed fain.’

Her chariot is driven by Satan, with a team of beasts ridden by the Mortal Sins, one of whom is Gluttony:

‘His belly was upblown with luxury,
And eke with fatness swollen were his eyne,
And like a crane his neck was long and fine,
Wherewith he swallowed up excessive feast,
For want whereof poor people oft did pine.’

And another Envy, than which nothing could be finer:

‘Malicious Envy rode
Upon a ravenous wolf, and still did chaw
Between his cankred teeth a venomous toad,
That all the poison ran about his jaw.
All in a kirtle of discolored say
He clothed was upainted full of eyes,
And in his bosom secretly there lay
An hateful snake, the which his tail upties
In many folds, and mortal sting implies.’

Who has ever approached the horror and the truth of the following description of the Captain of the Lusts? Note the various images which set forth the wasting away of body and soul, the coldness of the heart, consumed by unholy fire, the kindling of dire impatience, and the implanting of thorny ineradicable griefs:

‘As pale and wan as ashes was his look;
His body lean and meagre as a rake;
And skin all withered like a dried rook;
Thereto as cold and dreary as a snake;
That seemed to tremble evermore, and quake:
All in a canvas thin he was bedight,
And girded with a belt of twisted brake:
Upon his head he wore an helmet light
Made of a dead man’s skull.’

He is mounted upon a tiger, and in his hand is a drawn bow:

‘And many arrows under his right side,
Headed with flint, and feathers bloody-dyed.’

Beyond the wondrous fairy tale, far within it, often escaping the dazzled eye, is an inner life, steadily beaming there. Everything is referred to it, and, though still apprehensible,—

‘Suffers a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.’

He is divine who instinctively, in Bacon’s phrase, subordinates ‘the shows of things to the desires of the mind.’ Here as in Plato, a sense of the presence of the Deity, as the vital principle in all things, great or small, runs in a solemn undercurrent beneath the stream of visions. If a nymph is beautiful, it is because she has been touched with this heavenly light, with these angels’ tints:

‘Her face so fair, as flesh it seemed not,
But heavenly portrait of bright angels’ hue,
Clear as the sky, withouten blame or blot,
Through goodly mixture of complexion’s dew;
And in her cheeks the vermeil red did show
Like roses in a bed of lilies shed,
The which ambrosial odors from them throw,
And gazers’ sense with double pleasure fed,
Able to heal the sick and to revive the dead.

In her fair eyes two living lamps did flame,
Kindled above at th’ Heavenly Maker’s light,
And darted fire beams out of the same,
So passing persant, and so wondrous bright,
That quite bereav’d the rash beholder’s sight:
In them the blinded god his lustful fire
To kindle oft assayed, but had no might;
For with dread majesty and awful ire,
She broke his wanton darts, and quenched base desire.

Her ivory forehead, full of bounty brave,
Like a broad table did itself dispread,
For Love his lofty triumphs to engrave,
And write the battles of his great godhead:
All good and honour might therein be read;
For there their dwelling was. And, when she spake,
Sweet words, like dropping honey, she did shed;
And ’twixt the pearls and rubies softly brake
A silver sound, that heavenly music seemed to make.’

As Dante was drawn up from heaven to heaven by the eyes of Beatrice, through which he could look into the far Infinite, so was Spenser lifted away from the earthly by those of that

unique, imperishable Beauty which, above all created forms, a noble woman reveals. In holy rapture of Una, he exclaims,—

‘O happy earth,
Whereon thy innocent feet do ever tread.’

Again:

‘As bright as doth the morning star appear
Out of the East, with flaming locks bedight,
To tell that dawning day is drawing near,
And to the world does bring long-wished light:
So fair and fresh that Lady show’d herself in sight.’

In wilderness and wasteful desert, she seeks her knight, who has been beguiled from her by the subtle art of the enchanter:

‘One day nigh weary of the irksome way,
From her unhasty beast she did alight,
And on the grass her dainty limbs did lay
In secret shadow far from all men’s sight:
From her fair head her fillet she nudight
And laid her stole aside: *her angel’s face*
As the great eye of heaven shined bright,
And made a sunshine in the shady place;
Did never mortal eye behold such heavenly grace.

It fortun’d out of the thickest wood
A ramping lion rushed suddenly,
Hunting full greedy after savage blood:
Soon as the royal virgin he did spy,
With gaping month at her ran greedily,
To have at once devour’d her tender corse;
But to the prey when as he drew more nigh,
His bloody rage assuag’d with remorse,
And with the sight amaz’d, forgot his furious force.

Instead thereof he kiss’d her weary feet,
And lick’d her lily hand with fawning tongue;
As he her wronged innocence did meet.
O how can beauty master the most strong,
And simple truth subdue avenging wrong!’

The loftiest, deepest, most angelic element in this genius is reverence for woman—which is only a worship of the supernal charm and attraction rendered visible in her. All the wealth of his respect and tenderness is poured out at the feet of his heroines. In his adoration, he lifts them up to heights where no mortal fleck is visible. In this exalted mood he sings of his bride, in the *Epithalamion*, his marriage-song:

‘Behold, whiles she before the altar stands,
Hearing the holy priest that to her speaks,
And blesseth her with his two happy hands,
How the red roses flush up in her cheeks,
And the pure snow with goodly vermeil stain
Like crimson dyed in grain:

That even the angels, which continually
 About the sacred altar do remain,
 Forget their service and about her fly,
 Oft peeping in her face, that seems more fair
 The more they on it stare.
 But her sad eyes, still fastened on the ground,
 Are governed with goodly modesty,
 That suffers not one look to glance awry,
 Which may let in a little thought unsound.
 Why blush ye, Love, to give to me your hand,
 The pledge of all our band?
 Sing, ye sweet angels, Allelujah sing,
 That all the woods may answer, and your echoes ring!’

Spenser made many miscellaneous attempts in sonnets, pastorals, elegies, and hymns, all fairy-like or mystic, all stamped with the ruling idea, and all striving to express it,—moral sublimity and sensuous seduction.

Versification.—Spenser came to the *Fairy Queen* with his head full of Ariosto and the romantic poets of Italy. His exquisite ear had felt the melody of their heroic metre—the *ottava rima*, to which he added a grace of his own, the Alexandrine. The order of rhymes, it will be observed, is: 1, 3; 2, 4, 5, 7; 6, 8, 9. This gave to his stanza a fuller cadence, ‘the long, majestic march,’ well suited to the sober sublimity of his genius.

Style.—Luxuriant and spacious, yet simple and clear; seldom rivalled in the charm of its diffusion, the orient flush of its diction, and the music of its recurrent chimes. Many passages, it may be needless to observe, are beautifully harmonious, combining a subtle perfection of phrase with a happy coalescence of meaning and melody. The last, indeed, is often an essential part of the sentiment; and, with ‘many a bout of linked sweetness long drawn out,’ lures the thought along its pleasant paths. The modulation is made spirited and energetic by the variety of pauses. There is no slumberous monotony in these lines:

‘But he my lion, and my noble lord,
 How does he find in cruel heart to hate
 Her that him lov’d, and ever most ador’d
 As the God of my life? Why hath he me abhorr’d?’

Nor any languor in this:

‘Come hither, come hither, oh, come hastily!’

Spenser’s language, of one substance with the splendor of his fancy, would seem to have been chosen rather for its richness of

tone than for its intensity of meaning. Like all masters of speech, he is fond of toying with it a little. Sometimes his alliteration is tempted to excess; as,—

‘Eftsoones her shallow ship away did slide,
More swift than swallow shears the liquid sky.’

Generally, however, the initial assonances are scattered at adroit intervals, rarely obtrusive, but responsive to the idea. For instance:

‘In woods, in waves, in wars, she wons to dwell;
And will be found with peril and with pain.’

Or,—

‘A world of waters,
Horrible, hideous, roaring with hoarse cry.’

Or,—

‘All the day, before the sunny rays,
He used to slug or sleep, in slothful shade.’

Rank.—There had been much poetry, and not a little poetical power, since Chaucer; but the *Fairy Queen* was the first production that might challenge comparison with the *Canterbury Tales*. It was received with a burst of general welcome. The ‘new poet’ became almost the recognized title of its author. It portrayed, indeed, the wonder and mystery of the new life, the incongruous life of the Renaissance, moulding into harmonious form its warring ideals and contrasted impulses. All the past, with its imagery, its illusion, its glory,—and the present, with its rough romantic beauties and gorgeous pageantry,—descended upon the Fairy of Spenser, and, in the mellow light of his imagination, lost the passion of conflict, the grossness of lust, and the tarnish of physical contact.

His invention was extraordinary, and its mode unique. Shape after shape, scene after scene, monstrous and anomalous, or impossible and beautiful, rose from the unfathomable depths, to embody some shade of emotion or an idea; while, in the midst of the rising and commingling visions, he was unperturbed and serene, never hurrying, rarely if ever passionate. Next to Dante among the Italians, next to Virgil among the ancients, Milton surpasses him in the severity of his greatness, Shakespeare in the sweep and condensation of his power. Daring elevations, when they occur, indicate the strength of his genius rather than the habit of his mind. He lacked executive efficiency,—the coördinating, centralizing quality of the highest

order of imagination. But grandeur, intensity, and reflection aside, he is the most purely poetical of our writers. In the union of musical expression, fanciful conception of thought, and the exquisite sense of beauty, he excels them all. Eminent in wisdom, like every other greatest poet, he is also the finest dreamer that ever lived, and, as such, is the inheritance of all future generations. He repels none but the anti-poetical. His 'better parts' will ever interest the lovers of the beautiful, unchangeable amid the changes of taste, as long as riches are sought in the regions of the unknown.

Character.—Magnificently imaginative. Captivated with beauty; above all, with beauty of soul, which is the source of all outward charms,—

'For of the soul the body form doth take;
For soul is form, and doth the body make.'

The true glory of all material things is in the immortal idea which irradiates them; and they are lovable only as they are rendered thus nobly luminous:

'For that same goodly hue of white and red,
With which the cheeks are sprinkled, shall decay;
And those sweet rosy leaves, so fairly spread
Upon the lips, shall fade and fall away
To that they were, even to corrupted clay:
That golden wire, those sparkling eyes so bright,
Shall turn to dust and lose their goodly light.

But that fair lamp, from whose celestial ray
That light proceeds, which kindleth lover's fire,
Shall never be extinguished nor decay;
But, when the vital spirits do expire,
Upon her native planet shall retire;
For it is heavenly born, and cannot die,
Being a parcel of the purest sky.'

The seen is but the semblance; the unseen is the reality, ever fairer as you ascend the graduated scale. Ineffably fair is the spirit's dim but still enraptured vision of the absolute Beauty—God, who, in the objects of sense,—

'Daily doth display
And shew Himself in th' *image* of His grace.
As in a *looking-glass* through which He may
Be seen of all His creatures vile and base,
That are unable else to see His face.'

This is eminently Platonic. The bent of his mind was ever thus toward a supermundane sphere, in whose untrammelled ether it

might expatiate freely, joyously. To this sublime summit he carried everything, and thus subleized everything at a touch. Where most men see only the perishable form and color of the thing, he saw the joy of it, the soul of eternal youth that is in it. Yet, with a purity like that of driven snow, he had no lack of warmth. He is, of all our poets, the most truly sensuous; but so chaste and ardent, that when he painted sentiment and passion, or material loveliness, he could not but make them 'of glorious feature.'

Such a one does not wait to get into the next stage of existence to begin to enter it. He sees that the Infinite Life is the world of essence; that it is the meaning which glows through all matter; that out of it flows all goodness, all truth, all enduring happiness on this side of the grave:

'And is there care in Heaven? and is there love
In heavenly spirits to these creatures base,
That may compassion of their evils move?
There is: else much more wretched were the case
Of men than beasts: but O, the exceeding grace
Of highest God, that loves His creatures so,
And all His works with mercy doth embrace,
That blessed angels He sends to and fro,
To serve to wicked man, to serve His wicked foe!

How oft do they their silver bowers leave,
To come to succor us that succor want!
How oft do they with golden pinions cleave
The fleeting skies like flying pursuivant,
Against foul fiends to aid us militant!
They for us fight, they watch and duly ward,
And their bright squadrons round about us plant;
And all for love and nothing for reward;
O, why should heavenly God to men have such regard?'

Thus it is that, while he himself was outwardly vexed with discontent, fretted with neglect, his poetry breathes the very soul of contentment and cheer. It is not the gladness of mirth, but the deep satisfaction of the seer; for to such as have gained the point of changeless being, beyond the changing and phenomenal,—

'Their joy, their comfort, their desire, their gain,
Is fixed all on that which now they see;
All other sights but fained shadows be.'

Sensitive, tender, grateful, devout, learned, wise, and introspective, with 'the vision and the faculty divine,' his own words are applicable to him:

‘The noble heart that harbors virtuous thought
And is with child of glorious-great intent,
Can never rest until it forth have brought
The eternal brood of glory excellent.’

Influence.—He threw into English verse the soul of harmony, and made it more expansive, more richly descriptive, than it ever was before. More than any other, by his ideal method of treatment, and the splendor of his fancy, he contributed to the transformation of style and language. One so largely and so ardently admired, must have had many imitators. Browne and the two Fletchers were his professed disciples. Cowley said that he became ‘irrevocably a poet’ by reading him when a boy. Gray was accustomed to open him when he would frame—

‘Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.’

Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, and Keats show traces of him. Thomson wrote the most delightful of his own poems in his stanza. Dryden claimed him for a master. Milton called him ‘our sage and serious poet, whom I dare be known to think *a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas.*’ How so? Because he revealed, in lowly aspect, the ideal point of view; gave to souls a consciousness of their wings; sowed in them the seeds of a noble discontent with prosaic views of life; fastened the attention upon necessary uncreated natures—Ideas, into whose divine atmosphere no man can be lifted, without becoming, in some degree, himself divine. This is the inestimable value of such a character,—that he forms a standing protest against the tyranny of commonplace, against the liminary tone of English thought, enslaved to the five mechanic powers. He and his culture are needed to withstand the encroachments of artificial manners, to counteract the materializing tendencies of physical science, to sway and purify the energies that are too much confined to gain and pleasure and show. The end of a moral being is, not food or raiment or estate, but soul-expansion; and the parent of all noblest improvement is love—the outflow of desire toward the true, beautiful, and good, which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own. Whoever acts admirably upon the imagination, administers to this effect. Whoever gives the world a pictorial air, contributes to our emancipation. Whoever makes us more intensely and comprehensively imaginative, exalts us into the possession of incorruptible goods. In vain will philosophy

and fashion and utilitarianism oppose such a one. They fare as servants; he is sought after, and entertained as an angel. The ages esteem visions more than bread. Centuries hence, men will be touched—the more powerfully, the more they are advanced—by this artist and his art. His is the ceaseless fertility of the great Mother, the universal Love which was the prayer of his life, of which all loves are but the frail and fleeting blossoms:

‘So all the world by thee at first was made,
And dayly yet thou doest the same repayre;
Ne ought on earth that merry is and glad,
Ne ought on earth that lovely is and fayre,
But thou the same for pleasure didst prepayre:
Thou art the root of all that joyons is:
Great God of men and women, queene of th’ ayre,
Mother of laughter, and welspring of blisse,
O graunt that of my love at last I may not misse!’

SHAKESPEARE.

Mellifluous Shakespeare.—*Heywood.*

The thousand-souled.—*Coleridge.*

His thoughts, passions, feelings, strains of fancy, all are of this day as they were of his own; and his genius may be contemporary with the mind of every generation for a thousand years to come.—*Prof. Wilson.*

Biography.—Born in Stratford, in 1564; removed from school at an early age by the reverses of his father, once a prosperous tradesman and official, now on the verge of ruin; applied himself, in a desultory manner, to business; to keep up the reputation of his little town, took part in scrapes and frolics; at eighteen, married a farmer’s daughter, Anne Hathaway, aged twenty-six, to whom he was to bequeath only his ‘second best bed with furniture’; quit home for London, fell into theatrical society, and became an actor and a playwright, serving an apprenticeship in the revision of dramas; six years later, was applauded by the gifted and the noble; added to the trades of player and author those of manager and director of a theatre; acquired shares in the Blackfriars and the Globe; invested in land, farmed tithes, bought the finest house in Stratford, where his wife and three children continued to live; finally retired to his native village,

like a country gentleman and a landlord with a good rent-roll; wrote for the stage, took an active interest in the public welfare, made an occasional visit to the metropolis, lent money, managed his fortune, lived like a cheerful shop-keeper, and, without the care or the time to collect and publish his works, died on the anniversary of his birth-day, April 23, 1616.

Meanwhile, he had projected himself into all the varieties of human character; had mingled with men of vigorous limbs, strong appetites, impetuous passions, and keen intellect; had felt the fascinations of the stormy and irregular Marlowe; in the company of fashionable young nobles, had fed his senses on examples of Italian pleasures and elegances; had tasted misery, felt the thorn of care and discredit; had seen himself undervalued, named, along with Burbage and Greene, as one of 'His Majesty's poor players'; had said in the bitterness of humiliation:

'Alas, 'tis true I have gone here and there,
And made myself a motley to the view,
Gored mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear.'

And again:

'When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweepe my outcast state,
And trouble deaf Heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself, and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Happily I think on thee,—and then my state
(Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth) sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remembered, such wealth brings,
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.'

One of his daughters married a physician, the other a wine merchant. The second could not write her name. His only son, Hamnet, died when eleven years of age. So few are the recorded incidents in the outward career of the best head in the universe. Like Plato, he drew up the ladder after him; and the new age has sought in vain for a history of his house-and-street life. His biography, like Plato's, is internal; and the psychologist sheds the light of which the antiquary despairs, which it most imports us to have.

Writings.—The poems of Shakespeare are *Venus and Adonis*, *Lucrece*, *The Passionate Pilgrim*, and *Sonnets*. His plays, to several of which his title is disputed, are in number thirty-seven, and, according to the sources from which the dramatist drew his materials, may be grouped as,—

1. *Historical.*

DRAMAS.

HENRY VI, PART I,
HENRY VI, PART II,
HENRY VI, PART III,
RICHARD II,
RICHARD III,
KING JOHN,
HENRY IV, PART I,
HENRY IV, PART II,
HENRY V,
HENRY VIII,

Tragedy,

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SOURCES.

Denied; attributed to Marlowe.
Older play.
Older play.
Holinshed's *Chronicles*.
More's *History*.
Older play.
Older play.
Older play.
Older play.
Chronicles of Hall and Holinshed.

2. *Semi-historical.*

TITUS ANDRONICUS,
HAMLET,
KING LEAR,
MACBETH,
JULIUS CÆSAR,
ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA,
CORIOLANUS,
CYMBELINE,

Tragedy,

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Comedy (?)

Perhaps by Marlowe.
Saxo's Chronicle of Scandinavia.
Holinshed.
Holinshed's *Scotland*.
Plutarch's *Lives*.
Plutarch's *Lives*.
Plutarch's *Lives*.
Holinshed and Boccaccio.

3. *Fictional.*

LOVE'S LABOR LOST,
COMEDY OF ERRORS,
TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA,
MIDSUMMER'S NIGHT'S DREAM,
MERCHANT OF VENICE,
ROMEO AND JULIET,
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING,
TWELFTH NIGHT,
AS YOU LIKE IT,
TAMING OF THE SHREW,
PERICLES,
MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR,
MEASURE FOR MEASURE,
ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL,
TIMON OF ATHENS,
OTHELLO,
TROILUS AND CRESSIDA,
WINTER'S TALE,
TEMPEST,

Comedy,

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Tragedy,

Comedy,

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Tragedy,

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Comedy,

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Italian play.
Plautus.
An old romance.
Chaucer.
Gesta Romanorum.
Boccaccio.
Italian romance.
Italian romance.
Lodge's Romance.
Older play.
Gower.
Old tale.
Boccaccio.
Plutarch and others.
Old tale.
Chaucer.
Greene.
Italian romance.

In these performances, he exhausts all human experience, and imagines more; searches the heart, lays bare its strength and

weakness, its excesses and its rages; divines the secret impulses of humanity; depicts all manners and conditions, high and low, such as the world will always find; shines, like the sun, on the evil and the good; runs without effort the round of human ideas, records his convictions on the questions that knock at the gate of every brain, on life, love, trial, death, immortality, freedom, fate,—the ends of existence and the means. In so vast a field, we must select. Nor, amid so many portraitures, in so great variety of moods, in such profusion of sentiments, can the critic choose more than fragments, entreating the reader to divine the rest. The importance of this wisdom and this beauty sinks form, chronology, analytic completeness, out of notice.

Nowhere is the wonderful range of power more visible than in the varied types of female characters. Some are but babblers,—each the representative of a species; vulgar minds that forget and spare nothing, ignorant that conversation is but a selection, that every story is subject to the laws of dramatic poetry,—*festinat ad eventum*. Thus Mrs. Quickly reminds Falstaff of his promise of marriage:

‘Thou didst swear to me upon a parcel-gilt goblet, sitting in my Dolphin-chamber, at the round table, by a sea-coal fire, upon Wednesday in Whitsun week, when the prince broke thy head for liking his father to a singing-man of Windsor, thou didst swear to me then, as I was washing thy wound, to marry me and make me my lady thy wife. Canst thou deny it? Did not goodwife Keech, the butcher’s wife, come in then and call me gossip Quickly? coming in to borrow a mess of vinegar; telling us she had a good dish of prawns; whereby thou didst desire to eat some.’¹

She is held in thralldom to the order and circumstances in which her perceptions were originally acquired. Better still is the example of the nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*, a never-ending gossip, smelling of the kitchen, impudent, immoral, but faithful and affectionate like a dog. The involuntary associations of her thoughts are imperative. She would advance, but repeats her steps; or, struck with an image, wanders from the point. She brings Juliet news of her lover:

‘*Nurse*. I am aweary, give me leave awhile:

Fie, how my bones ache! what a jaunt have I had!

Jul. I would thou hadst my bones and I thy news.

Nay, come, I pray thee, speak; good, good nurse, speak.

Nurse. Jesu, what haste? can you not stay awhile?

Do you not see that I am out of breath?

Jul. How art thou out of breath when thou hast breath

To say to me that thou art out of breath?

The excuse that thou dost make in this delay
Is longer than the tale thou dost excuse.
Is thy news good or bad? answer to that;
Say either, and I'll stay the circumstance:
Let me be satisfied, is't good or bad?

Nurse. Well, you have made a simple choice; you know not how to choose a man: Romeo! no, not he; though his face be better than any man's, yet his leg excels all men's; and for a hand, and a foot, and a body, though they be not to be talked on, yet they are past compare: he is not the flower of courtesy, but, I'll warrant him, as gentle as a lamb. Go thy ways, wench: serve God. What, have you dined at home?

Jul. No, no: but all this did I know before.

What says he of our marriage? what of that?

Nurse. Lord, how my head aches! what a head have I!

It beats as it would fall in twenty pieces.

My back o' t'other side,—O, my back, my back!

Beshrew your heart for sending me about,

To catch my death with jaunting up and down!

Jul. I'faith, I am sorry that thou art not well.

Sweet, sweet, sweet nurse, tell me, what says my love?

Nurse. Your love says, like an honest gentleman, and a courteous, and a kind, and a handsome, and, I warrant, a virtuous,—Where is your mother?

Jul. Where is my mother! why, she is within;

Where should she be? How oddly thou repliest!

“Your love says, like an honest gentleman,

Where is your mother?”¹

But his heroines are of finer mould. They are the possible of the female mind, seen, for the first time, as in a dream, yet—unlike Spenser's—warm breathing realities. They are all charming or fascinating. Rosalind, sprightly but modest, coquettish and voluble, like a warbling and pretty bird, her tongue running

‘With wanton heed and giddy cunning.’

When Orlando promises to love her ‘for ever and a day,’ she says, with pretended cruelty:

‘Say a day without the ever, no, no, Orlando, men are April when they woo, December when they wed: maids are May when they are maids, but the sky changes when they are wives: I will be more jealous of thee than a Barbary cock-pigeon over his hen; more clamorous than a parrot against rain; more new-fangled than an ape: more giddy in my desires than a monkey; I will weep for nothing, like Diana in the fountain, and I will do that when you are disposed to be merry; I will laugh like a hyen, and that when you are inclined to sleep.’

‘But will my Rosalind do so?’—‘By my life, she will do as I do.’ Or, ‘What would you say to me now, an I were your very, very Rosalind?’ Miranda, whose soul shines upon Ferdinand through her innocent eyes, and he asks in a rapture of wonder:

‘I do beseech you

(Chiefly that I might set it in my prayers)

What is your name?¹

¹ *Tempest.*

Imogen, the most artless of all,—

‘So tender of rebukes that words are strokes,
And strokes death to her.’

Accused of inconstancy by her husband, and discarded, she disguises herself in order to be near him; finds, as she thinks, his dead body, and refuses to quit the spot till —

‘With wild-wood leaves and weeds, I ha’ strew’d his grave,
And on it said a century of prayers.’¹

Jachimo, dared by her husband to make trial of her fidelity, hides in her chamber in order to bring away pretended proofs against it. He notes the furniture, removes her bracelet, soliloquizing:

‘*Fresh lily,*
And whiter than the sheets! that I might touch!
But kiss; one kiss! . . .
‘Tis her breathing that
Perfumes the chamber thus:—the flame o’ the taper
Bows towards her; and would under-peep her lids,
To see the enclosed lights, now canopied
Under those windows, white and azure, lac’d
With blue of heaven’s own tint.’

Desdemona, guileless victim of a foul conspiracy,—

‘A maiden never bold;
Of spirit so still and quiet that her motion
Blushed at itself.’²

Cleopatra, voluptuous, ostentatious, haughty, dazzling, child of air and fire:

‘The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne,
Burnt on the water; the poop was beaten gold,
Purple the sails, and so perfumed, that
The winds were love-sick.’³

What a picture! —

‘Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
Her infinite variety. Other women cloy
The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry
Where most she satisfies.’

Cordelia, whose hallowed tears are —

‘The holy water from her heavenly eyes.’⁴

When her father, aged, irritable, half insane, asks her how she loves him, she cannot protest, is ashamed to parade her tenderness, as her sisters have done, in order to buy a dowry by it; is disinherited, expelled; afterwards, when she finds him forsaken

¹ *Cymbeline*.

² *Othello*.

³ *Antony and Cleopatra*.

⁴ *Lear*.

and mad, goes on her knees before him, caresses him, weeps over him, prays for him:

‘O yon kind gods,
Cure this great breach in his abused nature!
The untuned and jarring senses. O, wind up
Of this child-changed father! . . .
O my dear father! Restoration, hang
Thy medicine on my lips; and let this kiss
Repair those violent harms that my two sisters
Have in thy reverence made! . . . Was this a face
To be opposed against the warring winds? . . .
Mine enemy’s dog,
Though he had bit me, should have stood that night
Against my fire. . . .
How does my royal lord? How fares your majesty?’

Ophelia, sincere and constant, feeling deeply but saying little, and that quietly; delighted when she discovers that her love is reciprocated, yet chary of her words; separated from her lover, yet bearing her cruel fortune patiently; singing herself to rest, when reason is dethroned. What can be more beautiful than the words of the Queen on throwing flowers into her grave?—

‘Sweets to the sweet, farewell.’¹

A true Northener. Juliet, deep though easily moved, constant though ecstatic, pure though impulsive, uniting sweetness and dignity of manners with passionate violence. When Romeo first sees her, in the midst of elegance and splendor, he inquires:

‘What lady’s that which doth enrich the hand
Of yonder knight? . . .
O she doth teach the torches to burn bright,
Her beauty hangs upon the cheek of night,
Like a rich jewel in an Æthiop’s ear.’

She is overcome by the pressure at her heart, and apologizes thus for her maiden boldness:

‘O gentle Romeo,
If thou dost love pronounce it faithfully;
Or if thou think I am too quickly won
I’ll frown and be perverse, and say thee nay,
So thou wilt woo: but else not for the world.
In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond;
And therefore thou may’st think my ’havior light;
But trust me, gentleman, I’ll prove more true
Than those that have more cunning to be strange.
I should have been more strange, I must confess,
But that thou over-heard’st, ere I was ware,
My true love’s passion; therefore, pardon me,
And not impute this yielding to light love,
Which the dark night hath so discovered.’

¹ *Hamlet*.

Of the same sort—heart fluttering ever between pleasure, hope, and fear—is the soliloquy after marriage:

‘Come, Romeo! come, thou day in night;
For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night
Whiter than new snow on a raven’s back. . . .
Come, gentle night; come, loving, black-brow’d night,
Give me my Romeo: and when he shall die,
Take him and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine,
That all the world shall be in love with night,
And pay no worship to the garish sun.’

This is the true Southerner. Lady Macbeth, finally, than whom nothing could be more fearful and appalling; ambitious, commanding, inexorable, never to be diverted from a wicked purpose, when once formed. One obstacle stands between her family and a throne—Duncan; and on hearing of his fatal entrance under her battlements, she exclaims:

‘Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here:
And fill me, from the crown to th’ toe, top-full
Of direst cruelty; make thick my blood,
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
The effect and it. Come to my woman’s breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,
Whenever in your sightless substances
You wait on nature’s mischief. Come, thick night!
And pall thee in the dunkest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,
To cry, hold, hold!’

If you seek the passions of an animal and the imagination of a man of wit, you will find them exemplified in Falstaff, profane, dissolute, corpulent, voluble, and jolly; a jester, a drunkard, and a glutton, who sleeps among tavern jugs, and wakes to brag, lie, and steal. Yet he does not offend you, he delights you. He is himself openly, without malice or hypocrisy. He says to the prince, who berates him:

‘Dost thou hear, Hal? thou knowest in the state of innocency Adam fell; and what should poor Jack Falstaff do in the days of villainy? Thou seest I have more flesh than another man, and therefore more frailty.’¹

He is an Epicurean systematically, and, though a coward, pulls out his bottle on the field of battle to show his contempt for glory and danger. He is never at a loss, and devises a shift on

¹ *Henry IV, Part I.*

every occasion, at a moment's warning, with monumental impudence. Arrested for an old debt by Mrs. Quickly, he persuades her to pawn her plate to lend him ten pounds more. Insults, oaths, and boastings flow from him naturally, unceasingly, in geometrical progression. He pretends to have encountered two robbers,—has fought them alone; and presently, as the imagination of his own valor increases with the narrative, the number is four, then eleven, then fourteen. He is always good-natured, unconquerably self-possessed. Exposed or insulted, he laughs, retorts in coarse words, but owes no grudge. 'Gallants, lads, boys, hearts of gold.' 'What, shall we be merry?' A frank, embossed rascal, without thought of being just or unjust. If his vices gratify himself, they amuse others, without infecting them. Here he is, embodied and palpable:

Fal. Bardolph, am I not fallen away vilely since this last action? do I not bate? do I not dwindle? Why, my skin hangs about me like an old lady's loose gown; I am withered like an old apple-john. Well, I'll repent, and that suddenly, while I am in some liking; I shall be out of heart shortly, and then I shall have no strength to repent. An I have not forgotten what the inside of a church is made of, I am a peppercorn, a brewer's horse: the inside of a church! Company, villainous company, hath been the spoil of me.

Bard. Sir John, you are so fretful, you cannot live long.

Fal. Why, there is it: come sing me a bawdy song; make me merry. I was as virtuously given as a gentleman need to be; virtuous enough; swore little; diced not above seven times a week; went to a bawdy-house not above once in a quarter—of an hour; paid money that I borrowed, three or four times; lived well and in good compass: and now I live out of all order, out of all compass.

Bard. Why, you are so fat, Sir John, that you must needs be out of all compass, out of all reasonable compass, Sir John.

Fal. Do thou amend thy face, and I'll amend my life: thou art our admiral, thou bearest the lantern in the poop, but 'tis in the nose of thee; thou art the Knight of the Burning Lamp.

Bard. Why, Sir John, my face does you no harm.

Fal. No, I'll be sworn; I make as good use of it as many a man doth of Death's-head or a memento mori: I never see thy face but I think upon hell-fire and Dives that lived in purple; for there he is in his robes, burning, burning. If thou wert any way given to virtue, I would swear by thy face; my oath should be "By this fire, that's God's angel:" but thou art altogether given over; and wert indeed, but for the light in thy face, the son of utter darkness. When thou rankest up Gad's-hill in the night to catch my horse, if I did not think thou hadst been an ignis fatuus or a ball of wildfire, there's no purchase in money. O, thou art a perpetual triumph, an everlasting bonfire-light! Thou hast saved me a thousand marks in links and torches, walking with thee in the night betwixt tavern and tavern. . . .

Bard. 'Sblood, I would my face were in your belly!

Fal. God-a-mercy! so should I be sure to be heart-burned.'

An acute head and a calloused heart, with a deliberate and absorbing preference of evil, constitute the perfect villain. Iago is a demon in human form; a trooper and a hypocrite, with the philosophy of a cynic, the maxims of a detective, and the spirit

of an assassin. 'O my reputation, my reputation!' cries the disgraced Cassio. 'As I am an honest man,' says Iago, 'I thought you had received some bodily wound; there is more sense in that than in reputation.'¹ 'What wouldst thou write of me, if thou shouldst praise me?' says Desdemona:

'O gentle lady, do not put me to't;
For I am nothing, if not critical.'

She insists, and bids him draw the portrait of a perfect woman. He does it characteristically:

'Iago. She that was ever fair and never proud,
Had tongue at will and yet was never loud,
Never lack'd gold and yet went never gay,
Fled from her wish and yet said "Now I may,"
She that being anger'd, her revenge being nigh,
Bade her wrong stay and her displeasure fly,
She that in wisdom never was so frail
To change the cod's head for the salmon's tail,
She that could think and ne'er disclose her mind,
See suitors following and not look behind,
She was a wight, if ever such wight were,—

Des. To do what?

Iago. *To suckle fools and chronicle small beer.'*

To this impotent and sinister conclusion, all optimism is reduced. He speaks only in sarcasms. He is an inveterate misanthrope, and has a rancorous delight in the worst side of everything. His coolness, dexterity, and profound dissimulation appear admirably where he first enters upon the execution of his design to set Othello and Desdemona at fatal issue:

'Iago. My noble lord.

Othello. What dost thou say, Iago?

Iago. Did Michael Cassio, when you woo'd my lady,
Know of your love?

Othello. He did, from first to last.

Why dost thou ask?

Iago. But for a satisfaction of my thought,
No further harm.

Othello. Why of thy thought, Iago?

Iago. I did not think he had been acquainted with her.

Othello. O yes, and went between us very oft.

Iago. Indeed?

Othello. Indeed! ay, indeed. Discern'st thou ought in that?
Is he not honest?

Iago. Honest, my lord?

Othello. Ay, honest?

Iago. My lord, for aught I know.

Othello. What dost thou think?

Iago. Think, my lord?

Othello. Think, my lord? By heaven, he echoes me,
*As if there was some monster in his thought
Too hideous to be shown.'*

¹ Othello.

Like Mephistopheles, he can justify himself by cogent reasoning. When he gives the advice which is to be the ruin of the innocent and trusting, he likens the atrocious crime to virtue:

‘And what’s he then that says I play the villain?
When this advice is free I give and honest,
Probal to thinking and indeed the course
To win the Moor again? For ’tis most easy
The inclining Desdemona to subdue
In any honest suit: she’s framed as fruitful
As the free elements. And then for her
To win the Moor,—were’t to renounce his baptism,
All seals and symbols of redeemed sin,—
His soul is so enfetter’d to her love,
That she may make, unmake, do what she list,
Even as her appetite shall play the god
With his weak function. How am I then a villain?’

His ease arises from the torture he inflicts; his joy, from the success of his treacherous plots. When Othello swoons for grief, he rubs his hands for bliss: ‘Work on, my medicine, work! Thus credulous fools are caught.’ When Othello recovers, he inquires, with diabolical but natural indifference: ‘How is it, General? Have you not hurt your head?’

In Lear, passion, unrestrained and terrible, rises into colossal proportions. The poor old king, to whom patience is unknown, is the subject of prolonged and vast agony. His daughters, who turn against his age and weakness, are the one rooted idea in the desert of his mind; and their incredible treacheries gradually, through transports of fury and convulsions of misery ever deepening and growing, drive him mad. Nothing can exceed the awful beauty of the meeting between him and Cordelia, when, through her tender care, he revives and recollects her:

Cor. How does my royal lord? How fares your majesty!

Lear. You do me wrong, to take me out of the grave:
Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead.

Cor. Sir, do you know me?

Lear. You are a spirit I know: when did you die?

Cor. Still, still far wide!

Physician. He’s scarce awake; let him alone awhile.

Lear. Where have I been? Where am I? Fair daylight?
I am mightily abused. I should even die with pity,
To see another thus. I know not what to say.
I will not swear these are my hands:—let’s see;
I feel this pin prick. Would I were assur’d
Of my condition.

Cor. O, look upon me, sir,

And hold your hands in benediction o'er me: . . .
No, sir, you must not kneel.

Lear. Pray do not mock me:
I am a very foolish fond old man,
Fourscore and upward;
Not an hour more, nor less: and to deal plainly,
I fear I am not in my perfect mind.
Methinks I should know you, and know this man;
Yet I am doubtful; for I am mainly ignorant
What place this is; and all the skill I have
Remembers not these garments; nor I know not
Where I did lodge last night: do not laugh at me;
For, as I am a man, I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia.

Cor. And so I am, I am!'

Lear, who thought himself omnipotent, finds himself helpless; and, once pleased with false professions of love, now clings to that which is tranquil because of its depth and fulness. Thus they console each other when, after the triumph of their enemies, they are led to prison:

'Cor. We are not the first,
Who, with best meaning, have incur'd the worst.
For thee, oppressed king, am I cast down:
Myself could else out-frown false fortune's frown.—
Shall we not see these daughters, and these sisters?

Lear. No, no, no, no! Come, let's away to prison:
We too alone will sing like birds i' the cage:
When thou dost ask my blessing, I'll kneel down,
And ask of thee forgiveness: so we'll live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
Talk of court news; and we'll talk with them too—
Who loses, and who wins; who's in, who's out;—
And take upon us the mystery of things,
As if we were God's spies: and we'll wear out,
In a wall'd prison, packs, and sects of great ones,
That ebb and flow by the moon.'

The history of Macbeth is the story of a moral poisoning. Frank, sociable, and generous, though tainted from the first by base and ambitious thoughts, he is urged on to his ruin by the prophetic warnings of the witches, by golden opportunity, and the instigations of his wife. He has physical but lacks moral courage. The suggestion of a possible crown haunts him. He struggles, but he is a lion in the toils. He feels the resistless traction of fate, sees himself on the verge of an abyss, and his brain is filled with phantoms:

'Why do I yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,

Against the use of nature? Present fears
 Are less than horrible imaginings:
 My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
 Shakes so my single state of man that function
 Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is
 But what is not.'

To act, he must be sudden and desperate. When the deed is done, he is horrified, shudders to think of it, starts at every sound, is disturbed by a supposed word from the sleepers in an adjoining room:

'One cried, "God bless us!" and "Amen," the other;
 As they had seen me with these hangman's hands.
 Listening their fear, I could not say "Amen,"
 When they did say, "God bless us!" . . .
 But wherefore could I not pronounce "Amen"?
 I had most need of blessing, and "Amen"
 Stuck in my throat.'

Having murdered one, he must murder others, in order to preserve the fruits of his crime:

'I am in blood
 Steep'd in so far that, should I wade no more,
 Returning were as tedious as go o'er.'

He has Banquo murdered, and thereafter is in continual deadly terror of the ghost that 'will not down':

'Prithee, see there! Behold! look! lo! how say you?
 Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too.
 If charnel-houses and our graves must send
 Those that we bury back, our monuments
 Shall be the maws of kites. . . .

The times have been
 That, when the brains were out, the man would die,
 And there an end; but now they rise again,
 With twenty mortal murders on their crowns,
 And push us from our stools: . . .
 Avaunt! and quit my sight! let the earth hide thee!
 Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;
 Thou hast no speculation in those eyes
 Which thou dost glare with!'

A habit of slaughter, mechanical smiles, and a fixed belief in destiny are all that remain:

'Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
 That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
 And then is heard no more: it is a tale
 Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
 Signifying nothing.'

Yet we sympathize with him in that fine close of thoughtful melancholy:

‘My way of life
Is fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf;
And that which should accompany old age,
As honor, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have; but in their stead,
Curses not loud but deep, mouth-honor, breath
Which the poor heart would fain deny, but dare not.’

Hamlet is a metaphysician and a psychologist; a soul of sensibility, hope, refinement, and thought, with every kind of culture except the culture of active life, forced from its natural bias by extreme misfortune. He has seen only the beauty of humanity, and at once sees all its vileness in his *mother*:

‘O that this too, too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fix’d
His canon ‘gainst self-slaughter! O God! O God!
How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable,
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on’t! ah fie! ‘tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely. That it should come to this!
But two months dead: nay, not so much, not two:
So excellent a king, . . . so loving to my mother,
That he might not betwixt the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth! . . .
And yet, within a month,—
Let me not think on’t,—Frailty, thy name is woman!—
A little month, or ere those shoes were old
With which she follow’d my poor father’s body, . . .
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
She married.’

Then appears the ghost in the night, to inform him of the fratricide, and enjoin him to avenge the crime:

‘Hold, hold, my heart,
And you my sinews, grow not instant old,
But bear me stiffly up! Remember thee!
Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe. Remember thee!
Yea, from the table of my memory
I’ll wipe away all trivial fond records,
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past, . . .
And thy commandment all alone shall live.’

Henceforth he is a sceptic. His distress is transferred to the general account. The universe is tinged with the color of his own ideas. Sadness clings to him like a malady:

‘I have of late—but wherefore I know not—lost all my mirth, foregone all custom of exercises, and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o’erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors. What

a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me: no, nor woman neither.'

He doubts everything, doubts immortality, even doubts Ophelia, asks her, 'Are you honest?' Doubts himself, says to her: 'We are arrant knaves, all; believe none of us.' To a hopeless philosophy, the world is a dull blank, and man a grinning skull. In this mood, the unconscious Hamlet stumbles on the destined grave of Ophelia, and pauses to muse on death and decay. He comments on the skulls which the grave-digger throws up. This may be the 'pate of a politician, one that would circumvent God'; or of a courtier, 'which could say, "Good morrow, sweet lord!"' This may be a lawyer's:

'Where be his quiddities now, his quillets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery?'

Here is another. It is Yorick's:

'A fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy: he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning? quite chap-fallen? *Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favor she must come; make her laugh at that.*

The base affinities of the body are irresistibly attractive to his curiosity. Did Alexander look like this? Even so. The highest are but animate clay, and return to basest uses. 'Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, *till he find it stopping a bung-hole?*' This surplus of imagination disqualifies Hamlet for action. He is forever analyzing his own emotions and motives, and does nothing because he sees two ways of doing it. He is continually diverted from his purpose by his scruples. He spares his uncle because he finds him praying, and waits for some more fatal opportunity, 'that has no relish of salvation in it.' He is conscious of his defect, reproves himself for it, tries to reason himself out of it:

'How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? . . .

I do not know

Why yet I live to say, this thing's to do; . . .

O, from this time forth,

My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth.'

He only alternates between enthusiasm and inactivity. His triumphs in words are rocket-bursts of momentary splendor. Of deliberate energy he is not capable. If he plunges a sword into a breast, he does it in a fit of excitement, on a sudden impulse from without. So his strength, in the moment of its final extinction, leaps up to accomplish the punishment of the malefactor. It was thus that he had killed Polonius, his brooding bitterness leaving him without remorse:

'King. Now Hamlet, where's Polonius?

Hamlet. At supper.

King. At supper! where?

Hamlet. Not where he eats, but where he is eaten: a certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him.'

Hamlet is an enigma, never wholly explicable and forever suggestive.

The real is one great field of Shakespeare's power; the fantastical is another,—the supernatural world, the world of apparitions. We have elsewhere seen a variety of this life in the witches of *Macbeth*. Never were so exquisitely imagined, sustained, or expressed, the nimble genii, the bodiless sylphs, the dreamy population of the moonlit forests. Prospero's enchanted isle is full of—

'Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twanging instruments
Will hum about mine ears, and sometimes voices,
That if I then had waked after long sleep,
Would make me sleep again; and then in dreaming,
The clouds methought would open, and show riches
Ready to drop upon me: when I wak'd
I cried to dream again.'¹

Ariel, delicate as an abstraction of the dawn and vesper sunlights, flies around shipwrecked men to console them, spreads glowing visions before lovers, and executes his mission with the swiftness of thought:

'Where the bee sucks, there suck I:
In a cowslip's bell I lie. . . .
Merrily, merrily shall I live now
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough. . . .
I drink the air before me, and return
Or e'er your pulse twice beat.'²

When Titania, Queen of the Fairies, contends with Oberon, her husband, for the retention of her favorite page, of whom he

¹ *Tempest.* ² *Ibid.*

seeks to deprive her, the frightened elves hide in the acorn cups. Oberon comes off second best, and, by way of retaliation, drops upon Titania's sleeping eyes the juice of a magic flower, which changes her heart:

'What thou seest when thou dost wake
Do it for thy true love take;
Love and languish for his sake:
Be it ounce, or cat, or bear,
Pard, or boar with bristled hair,
In thy eye that shall appear
When thou wak'st, it is thy dear;
Wake, when some vile thing is near.'¹

The result is, that she finds herself enamored of Bottom, a stupid fellow with an ass's head:

'Out of this wood do not desire to go:
Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no. . . .
I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee;
And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep,
And sing, while thou on pressed flowers dost sleep,
And I will purge thy mortal grossness so,
That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.'

She calls her fairy attendants:

'Be kind and courteous to this gentleman,
Hop in his walks, and gambol in his eyes;
Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,
With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries:
The honey-bags steal from the humble-bees,
And for night tapers crop their waxen thighs,
And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes,
To have my love to bed, and to arise:
And pluck the wings from painted butterflies,
To fan the moon beams from his sleeping eyes.' . . .

Then:

'Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed,
While I thy *amiable cheeks* do coy
And stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head,
And kiss thy *fair large ears*, my *gentle joy*.'

To all this divine tenderness, her love makes characteristic reply:

'*Bot.* Where's Peas-blossom?

Peas. Ready.

Bot. *Scratch my head*, Peas-blossom. Where's Monsieur Cobweb?

Cob. Ready.

Bot. Monsieur Cobweb, good monsieur, get up your weapons in your hand, and kill me a *red-hipped humble-bee on the top of a thistle*; and, good monsieur, bring me the honey-bag. *Do not fret yourself too much with the action, monsieur*; and, good monsieur, have a care the honey-bag break not; *I would be loth to have you overflown with a honey-bag*, signior. Where's Monsieur Mustard-seed?

Must. Ready.

Bot. Give me your fist, Monsieur Mustard-seed. Pray you, leave your courtesies, good monsieur.

Must. What's your will?

¹ *Midsummer Night's Dream.*

Bot. Nothing, good monsieur, but to help Cavaliero Cobweb to scratch. I must to the barber's, monsieur; *for methinks I am marvellous hairy about the face*; and I am such a tender ass, if my hair do but tickle me I must scratch.

Tit. What, wilt thou hear some music, my sweet love?

Bot. I have a reasonable ear in music: let us have *the tongs and the bones*.

Tit. Or say, sweet love, what thou desirest to eat.

Bot. Truly a peck of provender. I could munch your *good dry oats*. Methinks I have a great desire to a bottle of hay. Good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow.

Tit. I have a venturons fairy, that shall seek

The squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee new nuts.

Bot. *I had rather have a handful or two of dried peas*:—but, I pray you, let none of your people stir me; I have an exposition of sleep come upon me.

Tit. Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms.

Fairies, begone, and be all ways away.

So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle

Gently entwist;—the female ivy so

Enrings *the barky fingers* of the elm.

O, how I love thee! How I dote on thee!

Was ever such extent of action? such diverse creation? such mastery of situation and form?

It is this poet's prerogative to have *thought* more finely and more extensively than all other poets combined. Not the least of the emblazonries upon his shield is his teeming fertility of fine ideas and sentiments, universally intelligible, and applicable to the circumstances of every human being. For instance, as merest suggestions of the golden bead-roll that might be gathered from his works:

'Tis the mind that makes the body rich.'

'How ill white hairs become a fool and jester!'

'Death lies on her, like an untimely frost
Upon the sweetest flower of all the field.'

'Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny.'

'Violent delights have violent ends,
And in their triumph die.'

'Our doubts are traitors,
And make us lose the good we oft might win,
By fearing to attempt.'

'Good name, in man and woman, dear my lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their souls.'

'For aught that ever I could read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth.'

'The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together: our virtues would be proud if our faults whipped them not; and our crimes would despair if they were not cherished by our virtues.'

'Never durst poet touch a pen to write
Until his ink were temper'd with love's sighs;

O, then his lines would ravage savage ears,
And plant in tyrants mild humility.'

'Tis better to be lowly born,
And range with humble livers in content,
Than to be perk'd up in glistening grief,
And wear a golden sorrow.'

'There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st,
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.'

'The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temple, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit shall dissolve;
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind.'

'Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot;
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice;
To be imprisoned in the viewless winds,
And blown with restless violence about
The pendent world; or to be worse than worst
Of those, that lawless and incertain thoughts
Imagine howling!—'tis too horrible!'

Perhaps there is a mood in the life of every thoughtful person when he feels, and in a sense truly, that human existence is a little tract of feverish vigils, islanded by a shoreless ocean of oblivion:

'We are such stuff
As dreams are made of, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.'

Still, in his higher, serener altitudes, he will bid us do our dream duties:

'To thine own self be true:
And it must follow as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.'

And still he believes in the immortal essence of the dreamer; and will say with Hamlet, of the ghost, though his teeth chatter:

'I do not set my life at a *pin's* fee;
And for my *soul*, what can it do to *that*,
Being a thing immortal as itself?'

When, too, a man has tried wearily but vainly to adjust the infinite part of him to the finite, or, in learning to prescribe a narrower boundary for the things he expected to obtain, has felt

stealing upon him an unwelcome conviction of the vanity of human hopes, he may think,—

‘There’s a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.’¹

Or this?—

‘That we would do,
We should do when we would; for this *would* changes,
And hath abatements, and delays as many
As there are tongues, are hands, are instruments.’

But, with a truer insight, he will confess this to be but a fragment, a partial account, of our complex nature:

‘Our remedies oft in *ourselves* do lie,
Which we ascribe to *heaven*; the *fated sky*
Gives us *free scope*, only doth backward push
Our slow designs when we ourselves are dull.’²

Lately Tyndall, of the advanced materialists, declared at Birmingham that ‘the robber, the ravisher, and the murderer offend because they can not help offending.’ But three hundred years before, at Stratford-on-Avon, a far greater than Tyndall proclaimed in words that will never die:

‘This is the excellent foppery of the world, that, when we are sick in fortune,—often the surfeit of our own behavior,—we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars: *as if we were villains by necessity*; fools by heavenly compulsion: knaves, thieves, and traitors by spherical predominance: drunkards, liars, and adulterers, by an enforced obedience of planetary influence: and all that we are evil in, *by a divine thrusting on*: an admirable evasion of abominable man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star! . . . Tut, I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my birth.’³

Lord Bacon wished that a science of the human passions might be elaborated. He could have found it in Shakespeare. The parts are there, needing only to be combined into a consistent whole. Underlying and penetrating them is the Moral Law. They disclose a constantly recurring emphasis, a pervading agency, of the two grand factors in moral being,—the motive

¹ *Hamlet*. M. Taine, intent upon the confirmation of a theory, would have Shakespeare define man as a ‘nervous machine’ led at random by determinate and complex circumstances. But the eminent Frenchman, more brilliant than profound, has, in the passages he cites, not only generalized from inadequate data, but has failed to discriminate between dramatic and philosophical or theological significance. It is when we have divested ourselves of our proper humanity that life becomes a walking shadow—an automaton. Did M. Taine note this?—

‘Refrain to-night,
And that shall lend a kind of easiness
To the next abstinence: the next more easy;
For use almost can change the stamp of nature,
And either curb the devil, or throw him out,
With wondrous potency.’

² *All’s Well that Ends Well*.

³ *King Lear*.

force and the perceptive faculty,—*Free-Will* and *Conscience*. Let us hear a few of the observations which this anatomist of the heart, by the simple exposition of human conduct, has made in the sphere of the latter. For example, of the monitory function of conscience, the collision and struggle of opposite impulses:

‘Conscience is a thousand swords.’¹

Or,—

First Murd. How dost thou feel thyself now?

Second Murd. ‘Faith, some certain dregs of conscience are yet within me.

First Murd. Remember our reward, when the deed is done.

Second Murd. ‘Zounds, he dies: I had forgot the reward.

First Murd. Where is thy conscience now?

Second Murd. In the Duke of Gloucester’s purse.

First Murd. So when he opens his purse to give us our reward, thy conscience flies out.

Second Murd. ‘Tis no matter. Let it go; there’s few or none will entertain it.

First Murd. How if it come to thee again?

Second Murd. I’ll not meddle with it: it is a dangerous thing: it makes a man a coward: a man cannot steal, but it accuseth him; a man cannot swear, but it check him; . . . ’tis a blushing shamefaced spirit that mutinies in a man’s bosom; it fills one full of obstacles: it made me once restore a purse of gold that by chance I found; it beggars any man that keeps it: it is turned out of all towns and cities for a dangerous thing. . . .

First Murd. ‘Zounds, it is even now at my elbow, persuading me not to kill the duke.’²

Or,—

‘*Macb.* If it were done *when* ’tis done, then ’twere well

It were done quickly: if the assassination
Could trammel up the *consequence*, and catch
With his surcease success; that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all *here*,
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
We’d jump the *life to come*. But in these cases
We still have judgment here; that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
To plague the inventor: . . .

This Duncan

Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
The deep damnation of his taking-off;
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blast, or heaven’s chernbim, horse
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye
That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o’erleaps itself.’³

More powerful still,—

‘Since Cassius first did whet me against Cæsar,
I have not slept.

Between the acting of a dreadful thing

¹ *Richard III.*

² *Ibid.*

³ *Macbeth.*

And the first motion, all the interim is
 Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream:
 The *genius* and the *mortal instruments*
 Are then in council; and the state of man,
 Like to a little kingdom, suffers then
 The nature of an *insurrection*.¹

The timidity of guilt, its mental and physical effects,—the soul accusing itself:

'Suspicion always haunts the guilty mind.'²
 'How is't with me when every noise appals me?'³
 'Guiltiness will *speak*, though tongues were out of use?'⁴
 'Methought I heard a voice cry, "*Sleep no more!*
 Macbeth does murder sleep;" . . .
 Still it cried, "*Sleep no more!*" to all the house:
 "Glamis hath murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor
 Shall sleep no more; Macbeth shall sleep no more."⁵

And so Lady Macbeth, at whose heart, when royalty crowns her and royal robes enfold her, gnaws the undying worm:

'*Naught's had—all's spent*
 Where our desire is had without content.
 'Tis safer to be that which we destroy
 Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy.'

The boldness of innocence:

'What stronger *breastplate* than a heart *untainted*?
 Thrice is he *armed* that hath his quarrel *just*,
 And he but *naked*, though locked up in *steel*,
 Whose conscience with injustice is *corrupted*.'⁶

Its peaceful, cheering, commanding effect:

'I feel within me
 A peace above all earthly dignities—
 A still and quiet conscience.'⁷

To sum up all:

'Mark but my fall, and that that ruin'd me.
 Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambition:
 By that sin fell the angels; how can man, then,
 The image of his Maker, hope to win by it?
 Love thyself last; cherish those hearts that hate thee;
 Corruption wins not more than honesty.
 Still in thy right hand carry gentle peace,
 To silence envious tongues. Be just, and fear not:
 Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy country's,
 Thy God's and truth's.'⁸

What altitudes did this man not reach? What depths did not his plummet sound? What domain of consciousness did he not extend?

¹ *Cæsar*. ² *Henry VI*. ³ *Macbeth*. ⁴ *Ibid*. ⁵ *Henry VI*. ⁶ *Henry VIII*. ⁷ *Ibid*.

Originality.—A few years ago the most eminent living writer¹ of Holland said to a congress of authors and publishers at Brussels: ‘For nearly forty years I have lived principally by robbery and theft.’ He justified his practice by the example of Virgil, Dante, Tasso, Milton, Voltaire, Schiller, and others. Every man is receptive. The greatest are the most indebted. Chaucer’s opulence has fed many pensioners, but he was himself a huge borrower, using Gower and the Italians like stone-quarries. Shakespeare, like every master, is at once heir and dispenser. He has no credit of design. His materials, as the table shows, were already prepared. He absorbed all the light anywhere radiating. He borrowed not only the plot, but often and extensively the very terms. Read Plutarch’s *Lives* for the originals of *Julius Caesar*. Out of 6,043 lines in *Henry VI*, 1,771 were written by some antecedent author; 2,373 by Shakespeare on the foundation laid by his predecessors; and only 1,899 by himself alone!² Ready-made plots, solitary thoughts, fortunate expressions were at hand, but he organized, enriched, and vivified them. Of little value where he found them, they were priceless where he left them. ‘Thought,’ says Emerson, ‘is the property of him who can entertain it; and of him who can adequately place it.’

Versification.—He had no system, no mannerism, but the true secret of blank verse—the adaptation of words and rhythms to the sense contained in them. Thought runs before expression and moulds it to its own peculiar uses. Hence the defective and redundant lines, and other rhythmic variations, as the various distribution of the time-values within a bar, by which Shakespeare out of the bare type of blank verse has brought such marvellous and subtle music.

Style.—His versification is powerful, sweet and varied, naturally and enduringly musical. It was the sweetness of his utterance that gave to his first readers their chief delight. To them, he was the ‘honey-tongued.’ His diction is appropriate to the persons who use it, and to the idea or sentiment it conveys.

The dominant feature of his style is impassioned luxuriance. It is the translation of abstract thoughts into visible images,—

¹ Van Lennep.² Malone’s computation.

thoughts that come of themselves, thrown out from the furnace of invention by the seething, whirling energies of passion, crowded and contorted; images that unfold like a series of paintings, involuntarily, in mingled contrasts, copious, jumbled, flaming. Thus Hamlet to the queen's question, 'What have I done?' answers as if his brain were on fire:

'Such an act
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,
Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose
From the fair forehead of an innocent love,
And sets a blister there, makes marriage-vows
As false as dicers' oaths: O, such a deed
As from the body of contraction plucks
The very soul, and sweet religion makes
A rhapsody of words; heaven's face doth glow:
Yea, this solidity and compound mass,
With tristful visage, as against the doom,
Is thought-sick at the act.'

Whatever the situation, he is exuberant because he is buried and absorbed in it. All objects shrink and expand to serve him, are transfigured by his rapture. Thus,—

'The morning steals upon the night,
Melting the darkness.'

Or,—

'How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!'

And,—

'The strong based promontory
Have I made shake, and by the spurs plucked up
The pine and cedar.'

To the excited soul, metaphor is a necessity. It thinks of no rules, and requires none. It studies not to be just or clear, but attains life. It seizes ideas and figures without a consciousness of its movements, and hurls them with an energy like to the supernatural. Its condensation and confusion abide no criticism, and heed none. As the result of inspiration, they mark the suddenness and the breaks of the inner and divine afflatus.

Rank.—To excel in pathos, in wit, or in humor; in sublimity, as Milton; in intensity, as Chaucer; or in remoteness, as Spenser,—would form a great poet; but to unite all, as Shakespeare has done, is—

*'To get the start of the majestic world,
And bear the palm alone!'*

Others have equalled or surpassed him in some particular excellence, but no man ever had at once such strength and variety of

imagination. He has grasped all the diversities of rank, sex, and age. His imperial muse has swept the poles of existence—the human and the superhuman. His characters are legion; but—whether sage or idiot, king or beggar, queen or nurse, hero or clown, plotting villain or sportive fairy—all are distinct, all speak and act with equal truth, all are inspired by the artist's animation. No other ever saw the world of nature and of mind from so many points of view. He *is* all that he imaginatively *sees*. Thus his figures acquire a relief and color which create illusion. They are so consistent and vital that we seem to know them, not by description, but by intercourse.

If we seek to refer this preëminence to the possession of any peculiar quality, we think it may be found in the superior power of grouping men in natural classes by an insight of general laws. His penetrative genius discerns the common attributes of individuals; his dramatic genius gathers them up into one conception, and embodies that in a type; his poetic genius lifts it into an ideal region, where, under circumstances more propitious, it may find a free and full development. Each character is thus the ideal head of a family. Each is rooted in humanity. Each is an impassioned *representative*. Each, therefore, is a species individualized. You will find many that resemble it, but none *identical* with it. In actual existence, there is no Falstaff, though there be multitudes *like* him. *Vital generalization* is thus the secret of Shakespeare's transcendent superiority over all other writers. His personages are of no locality, no sect. They belong to all regions, and to all ages. This is the essential principle of highest literature,—that it is addressed to man as man, not to men as they are parted into trades and professions. Its audience-chamber is the globe. Its touches of nature make the whole world kin.

We are not, however, to think of Shakespeare as having achieved his work by the power of his single genius. *He was fortunately born*. The tide of thoughts and events was at its flood. Contemporary ideas and necessities forced him on. He stood, like every greatest man, where all hands pointed in the direction in which he should go. Generations pioneered his road. Noble conceptions and a noble school of execution awaited him. Filled with the power of that spirit which prevailed widely

around him and formed his environment, he carried them to the summit of excellence. The topstone of Bunker Hill Monument is highest only because it rests on every block underneath; the lowest and smallest helps to hold it there.

Character.—Norman by the father, Saxon by the mother, Shakespeare had the English duality. He combined the Oriental soaring of the first with the grip and exactitude of the second. Imperfectly educated, he had as much culture as he wanted, and of whatever kind he wanted. All the classicism then attainable he got cheap—ready-made. Like Goethe, he set little store by useless learning. Yet who can reckon all that he knew of man and of history? Such minds have no need to be taught; they are full, and overflow, by the revelations of their seer's madness.

A nature affectionate and kind,¹ witty in conversation, brilliantly gay; extreme in joy and pain; so exquisitely sensitive, that, like a perfect harp, it vibrated at the slightest touch; with an imagination so broad, that it grasped all the complexity of human lot, its laughter and its tears; so copious, that he never erased what he had written; so glowing, that it set at defiance the Unities which imprisoned it, and produced in their stead a fantastic pageant,—a medley of forms, colors, and sentiments; with sympathies so embracing, so urgent, that he became transfused into all that he conceived, and gave to a multitude of diverse individualities each a separate soul.

Without doubt, in his youth, he was not a pattern of propriety. His *Venus and Adonis* is little else than a debauch. As a dramatist he is certainly neither a professed religionist, nor a pronounced reformer. He copies at random the high and the low. He holds the mirror up to all that is—the whole reality. While the lower half of the far-spread glass is therefore blotched, we believe that the upper half is his ultimate and essential self. With advancing years, he evidently dwells more upon the great characters of his tragedies, and gives increased light to moral issues. More and more, as he grows older, he tightens the strands in the colossal harp of his nature and strikes the resonant wires with a firmer plectrum. Deeper and deeper sink the pangs of affection misplaced, the memory of hours misspent. Conscience is ill at ease with the world. Thus again and

¹ 'My darling Shakespeare,' 'Sweet swan of Avon.'—*Ben Jonson*.

again he alludes to the infamy of his marriage. If the fact, without the form, exists before—

‘All sanctimonious ceremonies may
With full and holy rite be ministered,
No sweet aspersion shall the heavens let fall
To make this contract grow; but barren hate,
Sour-eyed disdain and discord, shall bestrew
The union of your bed with weeds so loathly
That you shall hate it both; therefore take heed
As Hymen’s lamps shall light you.’

Joy alternates with sadness, transports with melancholies:

‘That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin’d choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see’st the twilight of such day,
As after sun-set fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death’s second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see’st the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consum’d with that which it was nourish’d by.
This thou perceiv’st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.’

Here are the last notes struck within the hearing of this world:

‘I commend my soul into the hands of God, my Creator, hoping and assuredly believing, through the only merits of Jesus Christ, my Savior, to be made partaker of life everlasting.’¹

Influence.—Upon universal sympathy, upon historical inquiry, upon linguistic development, he has left a potent and enduring impress. His works and the Bible, both models of Teutonic simplicity, are the great conservators of English speech.

He infused into the early drama a spirit of high art; gave it order, symmetry, elevation; informed it with true airy wit and rich but subtle humor; made it an opulent and unfailing fount of entertainment and instruction.

He has revealed, in fresh, familiar, significant, and precise details, the complete condition of civilization: and thus to attain nature truthfully in the balance of motives and the issues of action, is in the most vital of all ways to be moral; to be a propagator, though by indirection, of the morality that governs and illuminates the world; else is nature immoral and in fellowship with impurity.

¹ Shakespeare’s will.

Consider the mental activity of which he is the occasion; how far, and for how many, he has enlarged the circle of study and reflection; the fund of maxims, observations, and sentiments, that relate to whatever is interesting, important, or lofty in human life, and whose infinite variety age cannot wither nor custom stale. Art, science, history, politics, physics, philosophy, shall tax him for illustration while the tide of human feelings and passions shall continue its course.

Shakespeare is like a great primeval forest, whence timber shall be cut and used as long as winds blow and leaves are green.

PHILOSOPHIC PERIOD.

CHAPTER VII.

FEATURES.

Man is explicable by nothing less than all his history.—*Emerson.*

Politics.—European civilization had merged in two essential facts,—free inquiry and centralization of power; the first prevailing in religious society, the second in civil. Before these two could be reconciled, a struggle between them was inevitable. On the one hand, royalty declared itself superior to the laws; on the other, the spirit of liberty was passing from the public mind to the state. When, in 1603, James, the *Sixth* of Scotland and the *First* of England, ascended the throne, the decisive hour was fast approaching when either the king must become absolute, or the parliament preponderant. He alternately enraged and alarmed them by his monstrous claims, and excited their scorn by his concessions; kept discontent alive by his fondness for worthless and tyrannical favorites; provoked derision by his cowardice, his pedantry, his ungainly person, and his uncouth manners. The dignity of government was weakened, loyalty was cooled, and revolution was fostered. Under his son and successor Charles I, the struggle went on. He inherited his father's theories, with a stronger disposition to carry them into effect. He imposed and collected illegal taxes, made forced loans; was artful, capricious, and winding; entered into compacts which he had no intention of observing; was perfidious from habit and on principle. The commons put on a sterner front. Parliament after parliament was dissolved, each more intractable than the former. Then he attempted to rule without one, and for eleven years—an interval utterly without precedent—the Houses were not convoked. Yielding at length to the pressure of necessity, he summoned them in 1640, but quickly dismissed them when they would have considered the grievances of the nation. The

opposition grew fiercer. In November of the same year, without money, without credit, without authority even in his own camp, he yielded again; and then met the ever-memorable body known as the Long Parliament. Again he broke faith with his council, with his people; and in August, 1642, the sword was drawn. Charles, driven to Scotland and by the Scots surrendered to his English subjects, expiated his crimes with his blood. The soul of the revolutionary party was Cromwell, whose warrior saints, devotedly attached to their leader, were bent on the establishment of a free and pious commonwealth. Having destroyed the king, they vanquished in turn the Parliament, which, having outlived its usefulness, and forgetting it was the creature of the army, exasperated the latter by its dictation. The victorious chief became king in everything but name. The government, though in form a republic, was in truth a military despotism; but the despot was wise and magnanimous, and the glory of England, grown dim in the two preceding reigns, shone again, with a brighter lustre than ever. Cromwell's death, in 1658, brought the rule of Puritanism to an end. The master had been a temporary necessity. His system, acknowledged by all to be necessary, was acceptable to none. The soldiers, against whom, while united, plots and risings of malcontents were ineffectual, now released from the control of that mighty spirit, separated into factions. Weary of strife, and terrified at the prospect of renewed civil warfare, the country sought again the shelter of the monarchy, and invited the return of its exiled prince. Charles II was proclaimed, and the Restoration was accomplished.

From 1641 dates the corporate existence of the two great parties which have ever since contended for the direction of public affairs. The royalists, comprising the nobles, the gentry, and the prelacy, were called *Cavaliers*, from their gallant bearing and equestrian skill. The opposition, comprising a few of the peers, the bulk of citizens and yeomen, and the Nonconformists, were called *Roundheads*, from the Puritan fashion of wearing closely cropped hair. The names were afterwards changed to *Tory* and *Whig*, and these, still later, to *Conservative* and *Liberal*; but the principles have remained essentially the same. The watchword of the first is Order; that of the second, Progress.

Society.—In the midst of light, the thick darkness of the middle-age rested on Ireland. Only the heavy hand of a single despot could deliver her from the local despotism of a hundred masters. Cromwell's conquest was a series of awful massacres. 'I am persuaded,' he says, 'that this is a righteous judgement of God upon these barbarous wretches who have imbrued their hands in so much innocent blood, and that it will tend to prevent the effusion of blood for the future.' She was, as ever since, undisguisedly governed as a dependency won by the sword.

Scotland, joined to her neighbor on the most honorable terms, preserved her dignity in retaining her constitution and laws. Her people, however, had always been singularly turbulent. They had butchered their first James in his bed-chamber; had rebelled repeatedly against the second; had slain the third on the field of battle; had broken the heart of the fifth by their disobedience; had imprisoned Mary, and led her son captive. The border was a chaos of violence; and along the line between the Highlands and Lowlands raged an incessant predatory war.

England had long been steadily advancing. Men had become accustomed to peaceful pursuits, and irritation did not now so readily as in former ages take the form of rebellion. From the rising of the northern earls against Elizabeth, to the memorable reckoning against Charles I, seventy years had elapsed without intestine hostilities. The national wealth had greatly multiplied, and civilization had greatly increased.

Still, we shall not forget the difference between the rude and thoughtless boy and the refined and accomplished man. Masters habitually beat their servants, teachers their pupils, and husbands their wives. The offender in the pillory was happy to escape with life from the shower of brickbats and paving stones. If tied to the cart's tail, the officer was implored to make him howl. Pleasure parties were arranged for the purpose of seeing wretched women whipped. Fights, in which gladiators hacked each other to pieces, were the delight of multitudes. At the Restoration, the glorious leaders of the Puritan faith were cut down alive from the gallows, and quartered amidst insults; while others—Cromwell among them—were dug up, and exposed on the gibbet.

The police were in constant collision with ruffians who wore rapiers and daggers. At night bands of dissolute youth domineered over the streets, which were buried in profound darkness. It was these pests of London that suggested to Milton the lines:

‘And in luxurious cities, when the noise
Of riot ascends above their loftiest towers,
And injury and outrage, and when night
Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons
Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine.’

In the outcast quarters of the city, even the warrant of the Chief Justice could not be executed without a company of musketeers. Sanguinary encounters with robbers were frequent. Mounted highwaymen infested all the great approaches to the metropolis.

With the decline of enthusiasm and respect, courtly manners degenerated into a base sensuality. An arch of triumph under James I often represented obscenities. On one occasion, the king and his royal brother of Denmark were carried to bed drunk. Hear a description of the entertainment—the masque of the Queen of Sheba:

‘The ladies abandon their sobriety, and are seen to roll about in intoxication. . . . The lady who did play the Queen’s part . . . did carry most precious gifts to both their Majesties; but, forgetting the steppes arising to the canopy, overset her caskets into his Danish Majesties lap, and fell at his feet, tho rather I think it was in his face. Much was the hurry and confusion; clothes and napkins were at hand, to make all clean. His Majesty then got up and would dance with the Queen of Sheba; but he fell down and humbled himself before her, and was carried to an inner chamber and laid on a bed of state; which was not a little defiled with the presents of the Queen which had been bestowed on his garments; such as wine, cream, jelly, beverage, cakes, spices, and other good matters. The entertainment and show went forward, and most of the presenters went backward, or fell down; wine did so occupy their upper chambers. Now did appear, in rich dress, Hope, Faith, and Charity: Hope did assay to speak, but wine rendered her endeavors so feeble that she withdrew, and hoped the king would excuse her brevity; Faith . . . left the court in a staggering condition. . . . They were both sick and spewing in the lower hall. Next came Victory, who . . . by a strange medley of versification . . . and after much lamentable utterance, was led away like a silly captive, and laid to sleep in the outer steps of the ante-chamber. As for Peace, she most rudely made war with her olive branch, and laid on the pates of those who did oppose her coming.’

Farther on we shall see how, underneath the disorderly bubbles at the surface, Puritanism was raising the national morality.

Religion.—The Reformation was incomplete. It had been made in accordance with the interests of its leaders,—the king and the prelates, who divided between themselves the riches and power of which they had despoiled the popes. By a large body of Protestants the alliance was regarded as a scheme for serving

two masters. It had closed reform, while the greater part of the abuses which induced them to desire it were continued. They denounced its pretensions, complained of its tyranny. They had not thrown off one yoke in order to receive another. They were not afraid to dissent from those who had themselves dissented. To no purpose were they fined, imprisoned, pilloried, mutilated; their ministers dismissed, tracked by spies, prosecuted by usurping and rapacious courts. They flourished in spite of the efforts to destroy them, because they lived honestly, sustained by the powerful ideas of God and conscience. Private life was transformed. Enthusiasm spread. From individual manners, the movement extended to public institutions. When the Long Parliament assembled, they were able to resort to arms. Every week the Commons occupied a day in deliberating on the progress of religion. The external and natural man was abolished. Recreations and ornaments were abandoned. To wear love-locks, to starch a ruff, to read the *Fairy Queen*, were sins. Law was changed into a guardian of morals:

‘Though the discipline of the church was at an end, there was nevertheless an uncommon spirit of devotion among people in the parliament quarters; the Lord’s day was observed with remarkable strictness, the churches being crowded with numerous and attentive hearers three or four times in the day; the officers of the peace patrolled the streets, and shut up all publick houses; there was no travelling on the road, or walking in the fields, except in cases of absolute necessity. Religious exercises were set up in private families, as reading the Scriptures, family prayer, repeating sermons, and singing of psalms, which was so universal that you might walk through the city of London on the evening of the Lord’s day, without seeing an idle person, or hearing anything but the voice of prayer or praise from churches and private houses.’

All the outlets of instinctive nature were closed. In 1644 it was ordained:

‘That no person shall travel, or carry a burden, or do any worldly labour, upon penalty of 10s. for the traveller and 5s. for every burden. That no person shall on the Lord’s day use, or be present at, any wrestling, shooting, fowling, ringing of bells for pleasure, markets, wakes, church-ales, dancing, games or sports whatsoever, upon penalty of 5s. to every one above fourteen years of age. And if children are found offending in the premises, their parents or guardians to forfeit 12d. for every offense. If the several fines above mentioned cannot be levied, the offending party shall be set in the stocks for the space of three hours.’

One ordinance directed that all the May-poles in England should be cut down. Later they attacked the stage. Theatres were to be dismantled, the spectators fined, the actors whipped at the cart’s-tail. They persecuted pleasure, the more surely to punish crime. In the army there was a like theory and a like practice. Cromwell’s Ironsides were organized upon the principle that a

perfect Christian makes a perfect soldier. A quartermaster, convicted of blasphemy, was condemned to have his tongue bored with a red-hot iron, his sword broken over his head, and himself to be dismissed. During the expedition in Ireland, soldiers passed their leisure hours in reading the Bible, in singing psalms, in religious controversy.

Into the primeval forests of America, exiles, from conscience, they carried the same fixed determination, the same fervent faith, the same stoical spirit. A rigid morality was raised into a civil law, and the Bible was the basis of the state. It was enacted in New Hampshire:

‘That if any person shall in the night time break and enter any dwelling-house in this State, with intent to kill, rob, steal, or to do or perpetrate any felony, the person so offending being thereof convicted shall suffer death.’

Again:

‘That no person shall travel on the Lord’s day between sun-rising and sun-setting, unless from necessity, or to attend public worship, visit the sick, or do some office of charity, on penalty of a sum not exceeding six dollars, nor less than one.’

And:

‘If any person shall openly deny the being of a God, or shall wilfully blaspheme the name of God, Jesus Christ, or the Holy Ghost, or shall curse or reproach the word of God, . . . he shall be punished by fine not exceeding fifty pounds, and may be bound to good behavior for a term not exceeding one year.’

In Maryland the law declared:

‘That if any person shall hereafter, within this province, wittingly, maliciously, and advisedly, by writing or speaking blaspheme or curse God, or deny our Saviour, Jesus Christ, to be the Son of God, or shall deny the Holy Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, or the Godhead of any of the three persons, or the unity of the Godhead, or shall utter any profane words concerning the Holy Trinity, or any of the persons thereof, and shall thereof be convicted by verdict, he shall, for the first offence, be bored through the tongue, and fined £20 to be levied of his body. And for the second offence, the offender shall be stigmatized by burning in the forehead with the letter B, and fined £40. And that for the third offense, the offender shall suffer death without the benefit of clergy.’

In Massachusetts, a man was publicly whipped for singing a profane song. A girl, who gave some roasted chestnuts to a boy, adding ironically that they would put him into Paradise, was sentenced to ask pardon three times in church, and to be imprisoned three days. So does personal asceticism develop into public tyranny.

Such were the ‘Precisians’ or ‘Puritans,’—Protestant dissenters, precise and combative minds, who, with the fundamental honesty of the race, demanded of the Anglicans a more searching and extensive reform, resolved to do all and to bear all rather

than be false to their convictions, firm in suffering as scrupulous in belief, and, amid all the fluctuations of fortune, leavening the temper of the times with a new conception of life and of man. If this ideal was, in the end, warped and overwrought, think of its genesis. Puritanism was the product of war. Hence the rigor of its precepts, its social austerity, its unbending creed. The general intoxication forced it into total abstinence. Only thus could it withstand laxity and license. To become belligerent was to become severe.

Each party—Royalists and Episcopalians in alliance against the Puritans—was in turn oppressed by the other. The latter, in the day of its power, was as intolerant as had been the former. We hate with a will, when we can hate at once God's enemies and our own. How will it be when power is restored to the supporters of the throne and Established Church, embittered, not instructed, by misfortune, and fretting under restraints like a checked and flooded stream?

If now it be asked what was the worth and meaning of this heroic sternness, the answer is,—it accomplished much, and we walk smoothly over its results. It enthroned purity on the domestic hearth, labor in the workshop, probity in the counting-house, truth in the tribunal; developed the science of emigration, fertilized the desert, practised the virtues it exacted; above all, it saved the national liberty, against the predominating Church, who, seeking to realize in England the same position as Romanism had occupied in Europe, flung herself on every occasion into the arms of the Court, and taught that no tyranny however gross, no violation of the constitution however flagrant, could justify resistance.¹ Little culture, indeed; no philosophy, no sentiment of harmonious beauty; but solid and convincing reasoners, energetic men of action. We can excuse the fanaticism of those who, when the battle-instinct is yet strong, are so intent on the essence of things, against others intent on semblances and forms divorced from reality.

Not unmixed good, certainly. The sun flings out impurities, gets balefully incrustated with spots. Ideals can never be completely embodied here. Not to reiterate what has already been

¹ 'Eternal damnation is prepared for all impenitent rebels in hell with Satan, the first founder of rebellion.'

noticed, one effect of Puritanism was to inflame, by its gloomy tenets, the zeal against witches. In the short space of the Commonwealth, more of these unfortunates perished than in the whole period before and after. In Suffolk sixty were hung in a single year,—a barbarity to which Butler alludes in *Hudibras*:

‘Hath not this present parliament
A leger to the devil sent
Fully empowered to treat about
Finding revolted witches out?
And has not he within a year
Hanged three-score of them in one shire?’

The superstition grew into a panic. In Scotland, controlled by a system of religious terrorism, it obtained an absolute ascendancy. In solemn synod, every minister was enjoined to appoint two of the elders of his parish as ‘a subtle and privy inquisition,’ who should question all parishioners upon oath as to their knowledge of witches. If the witch—commonly a half-doting woman—was obdurate, the first method of extorting confession was to ‘wake her.’ Across her face was bound an iron hoop with four prongs, which were thrust into her mouth. It was fastened behind to the wall, in such a manner that the victim was unable to lie down; and in this position she was sometimes kept for several days, carefully prevented from closing her eyes for a moment in sleep. To discover the *insensible* mark, which was the sure sign of guilt, long pins were thrust into her body. If this was ineffectual, other and worse tortures were in reserve—a kind of thumb-screw, or a frame in which the lower limbs were inserted, then broken by wedges driven in by a hammer. The seeds of the superstition were carried to New England by the Pilgrim Fathers. It flourished with frightful vigor in Massachusetts. Cotton Mather proclaimed it, and created a commission. Those who ventured to oppose the prosecutions were denounced as Sadducees and infidels. Multitudes were imprisoned, others fled, twenty-seven were executed. An old man of eighty was pressed to death. The clergy of Boston drew up an address of thanks to the commissioners, and expressed the hope that their zeal would never be relaxed.

Yet this was orthodoxy once, attested by an amount of evidence so varied and so ample as to preclude the possibility of doubt! You who would stifle the voice of reason, you who deem

another a heretic because his views are different from your own, you who would stigmatize the professors of other creeds as idolatrous,—consider the lesson of history. What is truth? Has it any absolute criterion? Your opinions are imagined to be conclusive and final; but have not the finalities of yesterday yielded to the larger generalizations of to-day? What assurance that, in the onward march of the collective soul, your doctrines shall not wane and vanish like the scattered dreams of your ancestors? Your faith assumes to be perfect; but what is perfection? The realized anticipations of the present. But is humanity tottering into the grave, or yet crawling out of the cradle? Who shall set a limit to the giant's unchained strength? Is not man forever defining himself? Does he not mould himself incessantly in thoughts, sentiments, acts? And, as incessantly progressing by these determinations, does he not successively burst his environments as he assumes them, only to pass into new ones, from which he will again escape in his unflagging and indefinite ascent? Through the ages to be, as through the ages gone, it shall be asked, 'Brethren, what of the *night?*' while to each and to all the same answer shall be returned, 'Lo, the *morning* cometh.'

Poetry.—We have seen its ardent youth and its early manhood; not preoccupied, as we are, with theories; happy in contemplating lovely objects, dreaming of nothing else, and wishing only that they might be the loveliest possible; not that things were more beautiful then, but that men, in the vernal freshness of the senses, found them so. Now prettiness takes the place of the beautiful. To the impassioned succeeds the agreeable. It is no more the overflow of images, compelling relief in words, but the sentiment of gallantry, turning a delicate compliment and a graceful phrase. The literary exhaustion is manifested in verses like these of **Wither**:

'Shall I, wasting in despair,
Die because a woman's fair?
Or make pale my cheeks with care
'Cause another's rosy are?
Be she fairer than the day
Or the flowery meads in May,
If she thinks not well of me,
What care I *how* fair she be? . . .
Great, or good, or kind or fair,
I will ne'er the more despair:

If she love me (this believe),
 I will die ere she shall grieve.
 If she slight me when I woo,
 I can scorn and let her go;
 For if she be not for me,
 What care I for whom she be?’

But if like the rest, he is a reader and a versifier rather than a seer, he keeps close to the best he knows, pure enough to have delight in nature, reverent enough to give praise:

‘Now the glories of the year
 May be viewed at the best,
 And the earth doth now appear
 In her fairest garments dress’d:
 Sweetly smelling plants and flowers
 Do perfume the garden bowers;
 Hill and valley, wood and field,
 Mixed with pleasure profits yield.’

Withal, he has the dominating bent,—the serious thought of the long sad sleep beyond the dark gulf into which we plunge, uncertain of the issue:

‘As this my carnal robe grows old,
 Soil’d, rent, and worn by length of years,
 Let me on that by faith lay hold
 Which man in life immortal wears:
 So sanctify my days behind,
 So let my manners be refined,
 That when my soul and flesh must part,
 There lurk no terrors in my heart.’

These are the words of a Puritan. We must expect even less substance in wits of the court, cavaliers of fashion,—**Carew**, **Herrick**, and **Suckling**. If the first is destitute of noble ideas, he gives us smooth and flexible verse, mere perfume and dainty form, with hardly a gem amid the rubbish-heap of trivialities:

‘He that loves a rosy cheek,
 Or a coral lip admires,
 Or from star-like eyes doth seek
 Fuel to maintain his fires,
 As old Time makes these decay,
 So his flames must waste away.

 But a smooth and steadfast mind,
 Gentle thoughts and calm desires,
 Hearts, with love combined,
 Kindle never-dying fires;
 Where these are not, I despise
 Lovely cheeks or lips or eyes.’

No fire in the second, but light; no passion, but sensuous reverie, with a radical indelicacy of fancy and a garrulous egotism. Let

us hear the exquisite who wrote twelve hundred little poems in Arcadian repose, while public riot was drowning the voices of some and driving others to madness:

‘Some ask’d me where the Rubies grew:
And nothing did I say,
But with my finger pointed to
The lips of Julia.
Some ask’d how Pearls did grow, and where:
Then spoke I to my girl,
To part her lips, and shew me there
The quarrelets of Pearl.’

Again:

‘Cherry-ripe, ripe, ripe, I cry,
Full and fair ones; come and buy:
If so be you ask me where
They do grow? I answer, there
Where my Julia’s lips do smile;—
There’s the land, or cherry-isle,
Whose plantations fully show
All the year where cherries grow.’

It is not the inner character of things which moves him, but the sense of bodily loveliness, which is perilously acute, nor easily restrained within bounds by artistic tact. Where is the mounting melody of Burns or Shelley? Even at his prayers, his spirit is mundane:

‘When the house doth sigh and weep,
And the world is drown’d in sleep,
Yet mine eyes the watch do keep,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the artless doctor sees
No one hope, but of his fees,
And his skill runs on the lees,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When his potion and his pill,
Has, or none, or little skill,
Meet for nothing but to kill,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!’

The third, handsome, rich, and prodigal, was a Royalist gentleman, and as such, wishing to try his hand at imagination and style, was able to write in liquid numbers a love-song that was in sympathy with the age:

‘Why so pale and wan, fond lover?
Prithee, why so pale?
Will, when looking well can’t move her,
Looking ill prevail?
Prithee, why so pale?
Why so dull and mute, young sinner?
Prithee, why so mute?

Will, when speaking well can't win,
Saying nothing do't?
Prithee, why so mute?

Quit, quit, for shame, this will not move:
This cannot take her.
If of herself she will not love,
Nothing can make her:
The devil take her!'

He has none of the penetrating faculty which opens the invisible door of obscure, endless depths, leads us to the centre, and leaves us to gather what more we may of the treasure of pure gold. He has only fancy, which stays at externals. Thus :

'Her feet beneath her petticoat
Like little mice stole in and out,
As if they feared the light,'¹

Again:

'Her lips were red, and one was thin,
Compared with that was next her chin,
Some bee had stung it newly.'²

The real bright being of the lip is there in an instant, but it is all outside; no expression, no mind. Now hear imagination speak:

'Lamp of life, thy lips are burning
Through the veil that seems to hide them,
As the radiant lines of morning
Through thin clouds, ere they divide them.'³

There is no levity here. He who sees into the heart of things sees too far, too darkly, too solemnly, too earnestly, to smile.

A second mark of decadence is the affectation of poets, their involved obscurity of style, their ingenious absurdities, their conceits. They desire to display their skill and wit in yoking together heterogeneous ideas, in justifying the unnatural, in converting life into a puzzle and a dream. They are characterized by the philosophizing spirit, the activity of the intellect rather than that of the emotions. The prevalent taste is to trace resemblances that are fantastic, to strain after novelty and surprise. Thus **Donne**, earliest of the school, says of a sea-voyage:

'There note they the ship's sicknesses,—the mast
Shaked with an ague, and the hold and waist
With a salt dropsy clogged.'

When a flea bites him and his mistress, he says:

'This flea is you and I, and this
Our marriage bed and marriage temple is.
Though Parents grudge, and you, w'are met,

¹*Ballad upon a Wedding.*

²*Ibid.*

³Shelley.

And cloyster'd in the living walls of jet.
 Though use make you apt to kill me,
 Let not to that selfe-murder added be,
 And sacrilege, three sins in killing three.'

We find little to admire, and nothing to love. We see that far-fetched similes, extravagant metaphors, are not here occasional blemishes, but the substance. He should have given us simple images, simply expressed; for he loved and suffered much: but fashion was stronger than nature. Much in this manner, though never in so light a humor, is the poetry of **Herbert**, whose quaintness is vitally connected with essential beauty and sweetness of soul. Let him live in these tender and beautiful lines:

'Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
 The bridal of the earth and sky;
 The dews shall weep thy fall to-night,
 For thou must die.'

And in these, than which no profounder were uttered in the Elizabethan age:

'More servants wait on Man
 Than he'll take notice of; in every path
 He treads down that which doth befriend him.
 When sickness makes him pale and wan
 O mighty Love! Man is one world, and hath
 Another to attend him.'

To the same class of verse—concoctions of novel and remote analogies, belongs *The Purple Island* of Fletcher, five cantos of allegorical anatomy and one of psychology, a languid sing-song of laborious riddles. Other instances of the change, equally frigid if less extravagant, are Wotton's *Character of a Happy Life*, Bacon's *Life of Man*, Brook's *Treatise of Religion*, which are noticed only as indications that the sentiment of truth was encroaching upon the sentiment of beauty, that the imaginary figures of art were giving way to the precise formulas of logic.

Apart from the crowd of sedulous imitators, is one who, preserving something of the energy and thrill of the original inspiration, refuses to be perverted; a Scot,—**Drummond** of Hawthornden,—whose private happiness was suddenly ruined, and whose public hopes were slowly wasted; a brooding, silent, tragic soul, altogether too serious to be artificial, with the fundamental Saxon idea of man and of existence:

'This world a hunting is.
 The prey poor man, the Nimrod fierce is death;
 His speedy greyhounds are

Lust, sickness, envy, care,
 Strife that ne'er falls amiss,
 With all those ills which haunt us while we breathe.
 Now if by chance we fly
 Of these the eager chase,
 Old age with stealing pace
 Casts up his nets, and there we panting die.'

There are moments when the greatest must feel and speak thus, troubled by the infinite obscurity that embraces our short, glimmering life, which seems then but a madness, a sorrow, a phantom: behind, a submerged continent; before, oblivion and dust:

'If crost with all mishaps be my poor life,
 If one short day I never spend in mirth,
 If my sprite with itself holds lasting strife,
 If sorrow's death is but a new sorrow's birth;
 If this vain world be but a sable stage
 Where slave-born man plays to the scoffing stars;
 If youth be toss'd with love, with weakness age,
 If knowledge serve to hold our thoughts in wars;
 If time can close the hundred mouths of fame,
 And make what long since past like that to be;
 If virtue only be an idle name,
 If I, when I was born, was born to die;
 Why seek I to prolong these loathsome days?
 The fairest rose in shortest time decays.'

At the end of one intellectual epoch, and at the beginning of another, appeared one of the most illustrious of these brain-poets, **Abraham Cowley**, a marvel of precocity, widely known at fifteen, and, like Reynolds the painter, accidentally determined to a particular direction:

'How this love of poetry came to be produced in me so early is a hard question. I believe I can tell the particular little chance which filled my head first with such chimes of verse as have never since left ringing there; for I remember when I began to read, and to take some pleasure in it, there was wont to lie in my mother's parlor (I know not by what accident, for she herself never in her life read any book but of devotion) . . . Spenser's works; this volume I happened to fall upon, and was infinitely delighted with the stories of the knights, monsters, giants, and brave houses which I found everywhere there (though my understanding had very little to do with all this), and by degrees, with the tinkling of the rhymes and the dance of the numbers, I had read him all over before I was twelve years old, and was thus made a poet almost immediately.'

He read much, learned much, wrote much; but while he is always either ingenious or profound, he is usually wearisome. Always on the watch for novelty, he is seldom natural, never pathetic, if ever sublime. His best performances are his translations from Anacreon, which are but the literature of pleasure—the idle joys of the banquet and the wine circle. Still, it is refreshing to see the beholder, once a partaker, abandoned to the fresh impulses

of an eager delight, quite forgetful of the skeleton that stands there to scare him from his roses and his cups:

‘The thirsty earth soaks up the rain,
And drinks, and gapes for drink again,
The plants suck in the earth, and are
With constant drinking fresh and fair.
The sea itself, which one would think
Should have but little need of drink,
Drinks ten thousand rivers up,
So fill’d that they o’erflow the cup.
The busy sun (and one would guess
By its drunken fiery face no less)
Drinks up the sea, and when he’s done,
The moon and stars drink up the sun.
They drink and dance by their own light,
They drink and revel all the night.
Nothing in nature’s sober found,
But an eternal health goes round.
Fill up the bowl then, fill it high,
Fill all the glasses there, for why
Should every creature drink but I,
Why, man of morals, tell me why?’

It is the waste of power in these men, not the want of it; the abuse of talent, not the absence of it, which we lament. To this they owe their poetical effacement with posterity. He who pays court to temporary prejudices, must content himself with ‘a deciduous laurel, of which the verdure in its spring may be bright and gay, but which time will continually steal from his brows.’

The Puritan conception of life was not one to nourish the eloquence of a ‘divine madness’; yet, Puritanism, in its higher attributes, in its moral elevation, was to have its monument, the work of a mighty and superb mind,—**Milton**, the prince of scholars, the impassioned devotee of virtue, a poetic seer of the antique type, with a strong affinity for the genius of Greece and of Rome, and able to estimate all the Renaissance could tell or teach.

The Muses had taken sanctuary in the theatres. England, indeed, was not to produce another *Hamlet*. Such heights could not be maintained. As the unknown was explored, the romantic ideal was fading. Puritanism was hardening and narrowing, while it was ennobling, life. Imagination was losing its buoyancy and bloom. The natural was giving place to the artificial. But the infection that tainted lyric and didactic poetry, affected in a less degree the drama, which even in its decay was

still magnificent, and, with an altered tone and manner, retained much of the warmth, mellowness, and reality of painting. Only at intervals does the chorus equal the solo of their matchless leader. The great elements in their natures are imperfectly harmonized. All grope amid qualified successes. All are noble in parts but without any general effect of nobleness. **Jonson**, the foremost, is but partial. He paints, not the whole of human nature, but a feature. His characters are not men and women as they are, but as they may be when mastered by a special bias or *humor*.

However, to be tenacious of what is grand and lofty is more praiseworthy than to delight in what is low and disagreeable. None refuse wholly the color of the low world around them. **Beaumont** and **Fletcher** are 'studiously indecent.' The object is to excite, at any cost, the passions of an audience craving crudities and horrors. Their young men are the 'bloods' of the Stuart Court. The older and graver are foul. If they paint a bad woman, she is monstrous; if a good one, she is unreal, as if the one extreme were to compensate or atone for the other. We are willing to accept this transcendental conception of goodness as a redeeming merit; for that stature appears in everything which we profoundly revere and love, and only by a certain infinitude which belongs to it are we drawn into perpetual aspiration. These two writers were fellow-laborers, brothers in heart as well as brothers in work; the first, slow, solid, and painstaking; the second, rapid, volatile, and inventive. The first is the smoother, sweeter; the second, the more fertile and forceful. Both agree in impurity, the one deliberately impure, the other heedlessly so. Of the fifty-two plays in the collection that bears their names jointly, there is scarcely one that has not marks of blight—haste, extravagance, or grossness. If we seek for a burst of passion, a beautiful sentiment, a brilliant dialogue, or a vivid picture, we shall find it. Amid tavern-rackets, the clash of swords, and the howl of slaughter, they cut life into scenes of shame and terror, yet carry before the footlights touching and poetical figures that would seem to place them on the open borders of the infinite. Thus Philaster, speaking of Bellario, whom he has taken for a page, but who is no other than a maiden that has disguised herself in order to be near him, says:

‘I found him sitting by a fountain-side,
 Of which he borrowed some to quench his thirst,
 And paid the nymph again as much in tears.
 A garland lay him by, made by himself,
 Of many several flowers, bred in the bay,
 Stuck in that mystic order, that the rareness
 Delighted one: But ever when he turned
 His tender eyes upon them, he would weep,
 As if he meant to make them grow again.
 Seeing such pretty helpless innocence
 Dwell in his face, I asked him all his story.
 He told me that his parents gentle died,
 Leaving him to the mercy of the fields,
 Which gave him roots; and of the crystal springs,
 Which did not stop their courses; and the sun,
 Which still, he thanked him, yielded him light.
 Then took he up his garland, and did shew
 What every flower, as country people hold,
 Did signify; and how all ordered thus,
 Expressed his grief; and to my thoughts did read
 The prettiest lecture of his country art
 That could be wished; so that methought I could
 Have studied it.’¹

When she is detected, an explanation is demanded, and she recounts her hopeless attachment:

‘My father oft would speak
 Your worth and virtue; and, as I did grow
 More and more apprehensive, I did thirst
 To see the man so praised; but yet all this
 Was but a maiden longing, to be lost
 As soon as found; till, sitting in my window,
 Printing my thoughts in lawn, I saw a god,
 I thought,—but it was you,—enter our gates.
 My blood flew out, and back again as fast
 As I had puffed it forth and sucked it in
 Like breath. Then was I called away in haste
 To entertain you. Never was a man,
 Heaved from a sheep-cote to a sceptre raised,
 So high in thoughts as I; you left a kiss
 Upon these lips then, which I mean to keep
 From you forever. I did hear you talk,
 Far above singing! After you were gone,
 I grew acquainted with my heart, and searched
 What stirred it so. Alas! I found it love;
 Yet far from lust; for could I but have lived
 In presence of you, I had had my end.
 For this I did delude my noble father
 With a feigned pilgrimage, and dressed myself
 In habit of a boy: and for I knew
 My birth no match for you, I was passed hope
 Of having you. And, understanding well
 That when I made discovery of my sex,
 I could not stay with you, I made a vow,

¹ *Philaster*; or, *Love Lies Bleeding*.

By all the most religious things a maid
 Could call together, never to be known,
 Whilst there was hope to hide me from men's eyes,
 For other than I seemed, that I might ever
 Abide with you.¹

Here are feminine innocence with feminine power, ethereal softness with martyr heroism. Few have equalled, fewer have excelled, this superior fineness of perception. Again, what could be more angelic than the modesty of Amoret, the faithful shepherdess?—

‘Fairer far
 Than the chaste blushing morn, or that fair star
 That guides the wand’ring seaman thro’ the deep.’²

She is transported by her tenderness, as her lover by his violence. Persuaded that she is unchaste, he strikes her to the ground with his sword, and casts her into a well, but the god lets fall into the wound ‘a drop from his watery locks,’ and, recovering, she goes in search of her Perigot—

‘Speak if thou be here, . . .
 Thy Amoret, thy dear,
 Calls on thy loved name. . . . ’Tis thy friend,
 Thy Amoret; come hither to give end
 To these consumings. Look up, gentle boy,
 I have forgot those pains and dear annoy
 I suffer’d for thy sake, and am content
 To be thy love again. Why hast thou rent
 Those curled locks, where I have often hung
 Ribbons, and damask roses, and have flung
 Waters distill’d to make thee fresh and gay,
 Sweeter than nosegays on a bridal day?
 Why dost thou cross thine arms, and hang thy face
 Down to thy bosom, letting fall apace,
 From those two little Heav’ns, upon the ground,
 Show’rs of more price, more orient, and more round,
 Than those that hang upon the moon’s pale brow?
 Cease these complainings, shepherd! I am now
 The same I ever was, as kind and free,
 And can forgive before you ask of me:
 Indeed, I can and will.’

At last the shepherd, after he has wounded her, and a nymph has cured her, is disabused, and throws himself on his knees before her. In spite of all he has done, she is unchanged:

‘I am thy love!
 Thy Amoret, for ever more thy love!
 Strike once more on my naked breast, I’ll prove
 As constant still. Oh, con’dst thou love me yet,
 How soon could I my former griefs forget!’

¹ *Philaster*; or, *Love Lies Bleeding*.

² *The Faithful Shepherdess*, by Fletcher alone, who survived his friend ten years. The joint productions of the two are usually estimated at fifteen.

Now hear the resounding talk of Memnon:

'I know no court but martial,
No oily language but the shock of arms,
No dalliance but with death, no lofty measures
But weary and sad marches, cold and hunger,
'Larums at midnight Valor's self would shake at;
Yet, I ne'er shrunk. Balls of consuming wildfire,
That licked men up like lightning have I laughed at,
And tossed 'em back again, like children's trifles.
Upon the edge of my enemies' swords
I have marched like whirlwinds, Fury at this hand waiting.
Death at my right, Fortune my forlorn hope:
When I have grappled with Destruction,
And tugged with pale-faced Ruin, Night and Mischief,
Frighted to see a new day break in blood.'¹

These contrasts are characteristic,—timidity, grace, devotion, patience; boldness, fury, contempt for consequences, concern only for the wild, reckless whim of the moment. Sometimes the heroic spirit appears, not as a mere flash, but as a character. When the Egyptians, to propitiate the mighty Cæsar, bring him Pompey's head, he says nobly, grandly, of his mortal enemy:

'Egyptians, dare ye think your highest pyramids,
Built to out-dure the sun, as you suppose,
Where your unworthy kings lie raked in ashes,
Are monuments fit for him? No, brood of Nilus,
Nothing can cover his high fame but heaven.
No pyramids set off his memories,
But the eternal substance of his greatness:
To which I leave him.'²

Scattered all over these dramas are exquisite lyrics, luxuriant descriptions, which show the poet greater than the dramatist. He who would have left the hoof-prints of unclean beasts in Paradise, could sing, in the rebound from sportive excess:

'Hence, all you vain delights,
As short as are the nights
Wherein you spend your folly!
There's naught in this life sweet,
If man were wise to see't,
But only melancholy;
O sweetest melancholy!
Welcome, folded arms and fixed eyes,
A sigh that piercing mortifies,
A look that's fasten'd to the ground,
A tongue chain'd up without a sound!
Fountain heads and pathless groves,
Places which pale passion loves!
Moonlight walks, when all the fowls
Are warmly hous'd, save bats and owls!

¹ *The Mad Lover.*

² *The False One.*

A midnight bell, a parting groan,
 These are the sounds we feed upon;
 Then stretch our bones in a still gloomy valley;
 Nothing's so dainty sweet as lovely melancholy.'

He who sold his birthright with posterity for the loathsome pot-tage of contemporary praise, could, in his diviner moods, regale the soul with medicinal sweets. For example, how charming are the aspects of his landscape, of the dewy verdant grove, where on a summer night, after their custom, the young men and girls go to gather flowers and plight their troth·

'Thro' yon same bending plain
 That flings his arm down to the main,
 And thro' these thick woods, have I run,
 Whose bottom never kiss'd the sun
 Since the lusty spring began. . . .

For to that holy wood is consecrate
 A virtuous well, about whose flow'ry banks
 The nimble-footed fairies dance their rounds,
 By the pale moon-shine, dipping oftentimes
 Their stolen children, so to make them free
 From dying flesh, and dull mortality.
 By this fair fount hath many a shepherd sworn
 And given away his freedom, many a troth
 Been plight, which neither Envy nor old Time
 Could ever break, with many a chaste kiss given
 In hope of coming happiness: by this
 Fresh fountain many a blushing maid
 Hath crowned the head of her long-loved shepherd
 With gaudy flowers, whilst he happy sung
 Lays of his love and dear captivity.

See the dew-drops, how they kiss
 Ev'ry little flower that is;
 Hanging on their velvet heads
 Like a rope of crystal beads.
 See the heavy clouds low falling
 And bright Hesperus down calling
 The dead Night from underground.'

In **Massinger** there is the same deplorable evil — licentious incident. But we remember that decorum was then unknown, and that his vital sympathies were for justice and virtue. He sang, like the nightingale, darkling. His life was spent in conflict and distress. Hence nowhere is he so great as when he describes the struggles of the brave through trial to victory, the unmerited sufferings of the pure, and the righteous terrors of conscience. If ever his placid spirit rises to ecstasy, the ecstasy is moral. Passages like the following are the best of him, ethically and poetically:

‘Look on the poor
With gentle eyes, for in such habits, often,
Angels desire an alms.’

‘By these blessed feet
That pace the paths of equity, and tread boldly
On the stiff neck of tyrannous oppression,
By these tears by which I bathe them, I conjure you
With pity to look on me.’

‘Happy are those
That knowing in their births, they are subject to
Uncertain changes, are still prepared and armed
For either fortune.’

‘When good men pursue
The path marked out by virtue, the blest saints
With joy look on it, and seraphic angels
Clap their celestial wings in heavenly plaudits.’

‘As yon have
A soul moulded from heaven, and do desire
To have it made a star there, make the means
Of your ascent to that celestial height
Virtue mingled with brave action: they draw near
The nature and the essence of the gods
Who imitate their goodness.’¹

More intense, though less genial, is the sombre and retiring **Ford**, the poet not merely of the heart but of the broken heart,—the heart worn, tortured, and torn. His tragedies surprise, stun, perplex, by the overpowering force of a passion which suggests kinship to insanity. The noblest is *The Broken Heart*. Penthea, whose soul is pledged to Orgilus, permits herself, from duty or submission, to be led to other nuptials, and finds the source of life dried up. Only the marriage of the heart is, in her eyes, genuine; the other is moral infidelity. In the depths of her despair, she says, not bitterly, but sadly:

‘My glass of life, sweet princess, hath few minutes
Remaining to run down; the sands are spent:
For by an inward messenger, I feel
The summons of departure short and certain. . . .
Glories of human greatness are but pleasing dreams,
And shadows soon decaying: on the stage
Of my mortality my youth hath acted
Some scenes of vanity, drawn out at length;
But varied pleasures sweetened in the mixture,
But tragical in issue. . . .
How weary I am of a lingering life,
Who count the best a misery. . . .
That remedy must be a winding-sheet, a fold of lead,
And some untrod-on corner in the earth.’

¹ Only eighteen of his thirty-seven plays are extant. The best known are *The Virgin Martyr*, *The Fatal Dowry*, *The Duke of Milan*, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*. The last has yet occasional representation, and contains the famous character of Sir Giles Overreach.

In the end she becomes mad, sinking continually under the incurable grief, the fatal thought:

‘Sure, if we were all sirens, we should sing pitifully,
And ’twere a comely music, when in parts
One sung another’s knell; the turtle sighs
When he hath lost his mate; and yet some say
He must be dead first: ’tis a fine deceit
To pass away in a dream! indeed, I’ve slept
With mine eyes open, a great while. No falsehood
Equals a broken faith; there’s not a hair
Sticks on my head, but, like a leaden plummet,
It sinks me to the grave: I must creep thither;
The journey is not long.’

Calantha, after enduring the most crushing calamities, concealed under a show of mirth, breaks under the terrible tension, and dies — without a tear:

‘Death shall not separate us. Oh, my lords,
I but deceived your eyes with antic gesture,
When one news strait came huddling on another
Of death, and death, and death: still I danced forward;
But it struck home and here, and in an instant.
Be such mere women, who with shrieks and outcries
Can vow a present end to all their sorrows,
Yet live to court new pleasures, and outlive them:
They are the silent griefs which cut the heart-strings:
Let me die smiling.’

There is the same sad strain in his few songs, though subdued, as:

‘Crowns may flourish and decay,
Beauties shine, but fade away.
Youth may revel, yet it must
Lie down in a bed of dust.’¹

And:

‘Fly hence, shadows, that do keep
Watchful sorrows, charmed in sleep!
Though the eyes be overtaken,
Yet the heart doth ever waken
Thoughts chained up in busy snares
Of continual woes and cares:
Love and griefs are so exprest,
As they rather sigh than rest.
Fly hence, shadows, that do keep
Watchful sorrows, charmed in sleep.’²

Of all these later dramatists, the most Shakespearean is **Webster**, an artist of agony. But one has seen farther into the dark, woful, and diabolical. He calls one of his heroines *The White Devil*,

¹*The Broken Heart.*

²*The Lover’s Melancholy.*

Vittoria Corombona, an Italian. Her mate is a duke, an adulterous lover, another devil, to whom she says:

'To pass away the time, I'll tell your grace
A dream I had last night. . . .
Methought I walk'd about the mid of night,
Into a church-yard, where a goodly yew-tree
Spread her large root in ground. Under that yew,
As I sat sadly leaning on a grave
Checquer'd with cross-sticks, there came stealing in
Your duchess and my husband; one of them
A pick-axe bore, th' other a rusty spade,
And in rough terms they 'gan to challenge me
About this yew. . . .
They told me my intent was to root up
That well-known yew, and plant i' th' stead of it
A wither'd black-thorn: and for that they vow'd
To bury me alive. My husband straight
With pick-axe 'gan to dig; and your fell duchess
With shovel, like a fury, voided out
The earth, and scattered bones; Lord, how, methought,
I trembled, and yet for all this terror
I could not pray. . . .
When to my rescue there arose, methought
A whirlwind, *which tel fall a massy arm*
From that strong plant;
And both were struck dead by that sacred yew.
In that base shallow grave which was their due.'

The import is clear, and her brother says, aside:

*'Excellent devil! she hath taught him in a dream
To make away his duchess and her husband.'*

Her husband is strangled, his wife is poisoned, and she, accused of both crimes, is brought before the tribunal. She defies her judges:

'To the point.
Find me guilty, sever head from body,
We'll part good friends: I scorn to hold my life
At yours, or any man's entreaty, sir. . . .
These are but feigned shadows of my evils;
Terrify babes, my lord, with painted devils;
I am past such needless palsy. For your names
Of whore and murderess, they proceed from you,
As if a man should spit against the wind;
The filth returns in's face.'

More insulting at the dagger's point:

'Yes, I shall welcome death
As princes do some great ambassadors;
I'll meet thy weapon half way. . . . 'Twas a manly blow;
The next thou giv'st, murder some sucking infant;
And then thou wilt be famous.'

Another is the Duchess of Malfi, who has secretly married her

steward. Her enraged brother determines to destroy her husband and children, resolves to kill her, but will first torture her. He comes to her in the dark, pretends to be reconciled, speaks affectionately, offers her his hand, but gives her a dead man's, then suddenly exhibits a group of waxen figures, covered with wounds to represent her slaughtered family. Then appears a company of madmen, who leap and howl; at last, with executioners and a coffin, a grave-digger, whose taunting talk is of the charnel-house. Sensibility dies. Asked of what she is thinking, she replies, with fixed gaze:

‘Of nothing;
When I muse thus, I sleep. . . .
Dost thou think we shall know one another
In the other world? . . .
Oh, that it were possible we might
But hold some two days’ conference with the dead!
From them I should learn somewhat, I am sure,
I never shall know here. I’ll tell thee a miracle;
I am not mad yet. . . .
The heaven o’er my head seems made of molten brass,
The earth of flaming sulphur, yet I am not mad.’

Told that she is to be strangled, she replies, with brave, quiet dignity:

‘I pray thee look thou giv’st my little boy
Some syrup for his cold; and let the girl
Say her prayers ere she sleep. . . .
Pull, and pull strongly, for your able strength
Must pull down heaven upon me.
Yet stay, *heaven gales are not so highly arched
As princes’ palaces; they that enter there
Must go upon their knees. . . .*
Go, tell my brothers when I am laid ont;
They then may feed in quiet.’

After this, her servant, the duke and his confidant, the cardinal and his mistress, are poisoned or assassinated. To the dying, in the midst of this butchery, what is the state of humanity? A troubled dream, a nightmare, a clashing destiny, and, at the end of all, a void:

‘We are only like dead walls or vaulted graves,
That, ruin’d, yield no echo. Fare yon well. . . .
O, this gloomy world!’
In what a shadow, or deep pit of darkness,
Doth womanish and fearful mankind live! . . .
In all our quest of greatness,
Like wanton boys, whose pastime is their care,
We follow after bubbles blown in the air.
Pleasure of life, what is’t? only the good hours

Of an ague; merely a preparative to rest,
 To endure vexation. . . .
 Whether we fall by ambition, blood, or lust,
 Like diamonds, we are cut with our own dust.'

To little of the dramatic talent, as we pass on to its lower grades, are we able to accord a distinct notice. The writers have merit, might have left a rich legacy to all generations, but wrote too much, which is perhaps the fault of all ages and of every author. They have the diversity of human life, but no central principle of order. Their scenes are more effective as detached than as connected. All degrade their fine metal by the intermixture of baser. All afford veins or lumps of the precious ore in the duller substance of their work. Here are specimens:

*'Man is a torch borne in the wind; a dream
 But of a shadow.'*¹

*'Now, all ye peaceful regents of the night,
 Silently gliding exhalations,
 Languishing winds, and murmuring falls of waters,
 Sadness of heart, and ominous secureness,
 Enchantments, dead sleeps, all the friends of rest
 That ever wrought upon the life of man,
 Extend your utmost strengths; and this charmed hour
 Fix like the centre.'*²

*'From his bright helm and shield did burn a most unwearied fire,
 Like rich Antinous' golden lamp, whose brightness men admire,
 Past all the other host of stars, when with his cheerful face,
 Fresh washed in lofty ocean waves, he doth the sky enchain.'*³

*'Patience, my lord! why, 't is the soul of peace;
 Of all the virtues, 't is nearest kin to heaven;
 It makes men look like gods. The best of men
 That e'er wore earth about him was a sufferer,
 A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit;
 The first true gentleman that ever breathed.'*⁴

*'He that in the sun is neither beam nor moat,
 He that's not mad after a petticoat,
 He for whom poor men's curses dig no grave,
 He that is neither lord's nor lawyer's slave,
 He that makes This his sea and That his shore,
 He that in's coffin is richer than before,
 He that counts Youth his sword and Age his staff,
 He whose right hand carves his own epitaph,
 He that upon his death-bed is a swan,
 And dead no crow,—he is a Happy Man.'*⁵

Of all the roses grafted on her cheeks,
 Of all the graces dancing in her eyes,
 Of all the music set upon her tongue,

¹ Chapman; a wise, manly, but irregular genius, greater as a translator of Homer than as a dramatist. ² Ibid. ³ Ibid: *Homer*.

⁴ Decker; a hopeful, cheerful, humane spirit, who turned vexations and miseries into commodities. ⁵ Ibid.

Of all that was past woman's excellence,
In her white bosom; look, a painted boar
Circumscribes all!'¹

'Love! hang love!

It is the abject outcast of the world.
Hate all things; hate the world, thyself, all men;
Hate knowledge; strive not to be overwise;
It drew destruction into Paradise;
Hate honor, virtue, they are bates
That entice men's hopes to sadder fates.'²

'As having clasped a rose

Within my palm, the rose being ta'en away,
My hand retains a little breath of sweet,
So may man's trunk, his spirit slipp'd away,
Hold still a faint perfume of his sweet guest.'³

'Black spirits and white; red spirits and gray;
Mingle, mingle, mingle, you that mingle may.

Titty, Tiffin, keep it stiff in;
Firedrake, Puckey, make it lucky;
Lizard, Robin, you must bob in:

Round, around, around, about, about;
All ill come running in; all good keep out!

1st Witch. Here's the blood of a bat.

Hecate. Put in that; oh, put in that.

2d Witch. Here's libbard's bane.

Hecate. Put it in again.

1st Witch. The juice of a toad, the oil of adder.

2d Witch. Those will make the younker madder.

All. Round, around, around, about, about;
All ill come running in; all good keep out!'⁴

'Now I go, now I fly

Malkin, my sweet spirit, and I.
Oh, what dainty pleasure 'tis
To ride in the air,
When the moon shines fair,
And sing and dance, and toy and kiss!
Over woods, high rocks, and mountains,
Over seas, our mistress' fountains,
Over steep towers and turrets,
We fly by night, 'mongst troops of spirits.
No ring of bells to our ears sounds;
No howls of wolves, no yelp of hounds;
No not the noise of waters' breach,
Or cannon's roar our height can reach.'⁵

'Simple and low is our condition,
For here with us is no ambition:
We with the sun our flocks unfold,
Whose rising makes their fleeces gold;
Our music from the birds we borrow,
They bidding us, we them, good-morrow.

¹ Decker.

² Marston; properly a satirist, bitter, misanthropic, cankered.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Middleton; a sagacious cynic, best known by his play of *The Witch*.

⁵ Ibid.

Our habits are but coarse and plain,
 Yet they defend from wind and rain:
 As warm too, in an equal eye,
 As those bestained in scarlet dye.
 The shepherd, with his homespun lass,
 As many merry hours doth pass,
 As courtiers with their costly girls,
 Though richly dressed in gold and pearls.¹

In **Shirley**, last of the great race, the fire and passion of the grand old era passes away. Imagination is driven from its last asylum. The sword is drawn, and the theatres are closed. Dramatists are stigmatized, actors are arrested; and when, after the lapse of a few years, they return to their old haunts, it is as roisterers under a foreign yoke.

Prose.—The drooping flower of poesy was succeeded by a blossom of prose, produced by the same inner growth, and, at its highest point, tinged with the like ideal colors. A half dozen writers will exhibit the expansion. We omit, at present, those who offer only the material of knowledge, the substance of wisdom merely,—annalists, antiquaries, scientists, pamphleteers, whether poets, dramatists, divines, or politicians; and pass to those who bring us merit of execution, as well as the residuary element of thought-value. Of **Bacon** we shall elsewhere treat. Fulness of thought and splendor of workmanship raise him into the realm of pure literature. Less originative and luminous, though of the same band of scholars and dreamers, is **Robert Burton**, an ecclesiastic, a recluse, an eccentric, spasmodically gay, as a rule sad. To amuse and relieve himself, after thirty years' reading, he wrote the *Anatomy of Melancholy*, an enormous medley of ideas, musical, medical, poetical, mathematical, philosophical; every page garnished with Latin, Greek, or French, from rare and unknown authors. It is the only book that ever took Dr. Johnson out of bed two hours sooner than he wished to rise. Here is a faint suggestion of his style—a glimpse into its jumble of observation, erudition, anecdote, instruction, and amusement:

'Boccace hath a pleasant tale to this purpose, which he borrowed from the Greeks, and which Beroaldus hath turned into Latin, Bebelius into verse, of Cymon and Iphigenia. This Cymon was a fool, a proper man of person, and the governor of Cyprus' son, out a very ass; insomuch that his father being ashamed of him, sent him to a farm-

¹ Thomas Heywood; graceful and gentle, one of the most prolific writers the world has ever seen.

house he had in the country, to be brought up; where by chance, as his manner was, walking alone, he espied a gallant young gentlewoman named Iphigenia, a burgomaster's daughter of Cyprus, with her maid, by a brook side, in a little thicket, fast asleep in her smock, where she had newly bathed herself. *When Cymon saw her he stood leaning on his staff, gaping on her immovable, and in a maze:* at last he fell so far in love with the glorious object, that he began to rouse himself up; to bethink what he was; would needs follow her to the city, and for her sake began to be civil, to learn to sing and dance, to play on instruments, and got all those gentleman-like qualities and compliments, in a short space, which his friends were most glad of. In brief, he became from an idiot and a clown, to be one of the most complete gentlemen in Cyprus; did many valorous exploits, and all for the love of Mistress Iphigenia. In a word, I may say thus much of them all, let them be never so clownish, rude and horrid, Grobians and sluts, if once they be in love, they will be most neat and spruce; for, *Omnibus rebus, et nitidis nitoribus antevenit amor;* they will follow the fashion, begin to trick up, and to have a good opinion of themselves; *venustatum enim mater Venus;* a ship is not so long a-rigging, as a young gentlewoman a-trimming up herself against her sweetheart comes. A painter's shop, a flowery meadow, is not so gracious an aspect in Nature's store-house as a young maid, *nubilis puella*, a Novitsa or Venetian bride, that looks for an husband; or a young man that is her suitor; composed looks, composed gait, clothes, gestures, actions, all composed; all the graces, elegancies, in the world, are in her face. Their best robes, ribbons, chains, jewels, lawns, linens, laces, spangles, must come on; *praeter quam res patitur student elegantiae*, they are beyond all measure coy, nice, and too curious on a sudden. 'Tis all their study, all their business, how to wear their clothes neat, to be polite and terse, and to set out themselves. No sooner doth a young man see his sweetheart coming, but he smugs up himself, pulls up his cloak, now fallen about his shoulders, ties his garters, points, sets his band, cuffs, slicks his hair, twires his beard, etc.'

The *Meditations* of **Bishop Hall**, the 'English Seneca,' are alike rich in imagery and sententious in expression. Passages like the following reveal the poetic temperament:

'Here is a tree overlaid with blossoms: it is not possible that all these should prosper; one of them must needs rob the other of moisture and growth. I do not love to see an infancy over-hopeful; in these pregnant beginnings one faculty starves another, and at last leaves the mind sapless and barren; as, therefore, we are wont to pull off some of the too frequent blossoms, that the rest may thrive, so it is good wisdom to moderate the early excess of the parts, or progress of over-forward childhood. Neither is it otherwise in our Christian profession: a sudden and lavish ostentation of grace may fill the eye with wonder, and the mouth with talk, but will not at the last fill the lap with fruit.'

Again:

'What a strange melancholic life doth this creature lead; to hide her head all the day long in an ivy bush, and at night, when all other birds are at rest, to fly abroad, and vent her harsh notes. I know not why the ancients made sacred this bird to wisdom, except it be for her safe closeness and singular perspicuity: that when other domestical and airy creatures are blind, she only hath inward light to discern the least objects for her own advantage. Surely thus much wit they have taught us in her: that he is the wisest man that would have least to do with the multitude; that no life is so safe as the obscure; that retiredness, if it have less comfort, yet has less danger and vexation; lastly, that he is truly wise who sees by a light of his own, when the rest of the world sit in an ignorant and confused darkness, unable to apprehend any truth save by the helps of an outward illumination.'

A like irradiating power of fancy, with a less sustained dignity, may be seen in **Dr. Fuller**, facetious without irreverence, and witty without bitterness. A few of his aphorisms may

suggest that strong and weighty, yet gentle and beautiful style which was his habit:

‘Learning hath gained most by those books by which the printers have lost.’

‘Moderation is the silken string running through the pearl-chain of all virtues.’

‘Anger is one of the sinews of the soul: he that wants it hath a maimed mind.’

‘Tombs are the clothes of the dead. A grave is but a plain suit, and a rich monument is one embroidered.’

‘They that marry ancient people, merely in expectation to bury them, hang themselves in hope that one will come and cut the halter.’

‘Heat gotten by degrees, with motion and exercise, is more natural, and stays longer by one, than what is gotten all at once by coming to the fire. Goods acquired by industry prove commonly more lasting than lands by descent.’

‘It is dangerous to gather flowers that grow on the banks of the pit of hell, for fear of falling in; yea, they which play with the devil’s rattles will be brought by degrees to wield his sword; and from making of sport, they come to doing of mischief.’

‘Generally, nature hangs out a sign of simplicity in the face of a fool, and there is enough in his countenance for a hue and cry to take him on suspicion; or else it is stamped in the figure of his body; their heads sometimes so little, that there is no room for wit; sometimes so long, that there is no wit for so much room.’

While the clash of arms is drawing men of letters from contemplation into the war of pens, **Sir Thomas Browne**, a physician and an idealist, is plunging into the abysses of meditative reverie. Unlike most of his profession, his delight is in the preternatural and visionary; he penetrates the internal structure of things, sees in the universe more than a dry catalogue, divines in every fact a mysterious soul, looks as from an eminence beyond visible phenomena, trembling with a kind of veneration before the dim vistas of the unknown, stirred to an eloquent sadness by the decay of nature and the dust of forgotten tombs, moved with an eloquent pity for the plumed and disorderly procession swallowed up in the fatal, all-devouring pit:

‘Circles and right lines limit and close all bodies, and the mortal right-lined circle must conclude and shut up all. There is no antidote against the opium of time, which temporally considereth all things. Our fathers find their graves in our short memories, and sadly tell us now we may be buried in our survivors. Gravestones tell truth scarce forty years. Generations pass while some trees stand, and old families last not three oaks. . . . Who can but pity the founder of the Pyramids? Herostratus lives that burnt the temple of Diana; he is almost lost that built it: time hath spared the epitaph of Adrian’s horse; confounded that of himself. In vain we compute our felicities by the advantage of our good names, since bad have equal durations; and Thersites is like to live as long as Agamemnon. Who knows whether the best of men be known; or whether there be not more remarkable persons forgot than any that stand remembered in the known account of time. Without the favour of the everlasting register, the first man had been as unknown as the last, and Methuselah’s long life had been his only chronicle.

Oblivion is not to be hired: the greatest part must be content to be as though they

had not been; to be found in the register of God, not in the record of man. Twenty-seven names make up the first story before the Flood; and the recorded names ever since contain not one living century. The number of the dead long exceedeth all that shall live. The night of time far surpasseth the day, and who knows when was the equinox? . . .

Darkness and light divide the course of time, and oblivion shares with memory a great part even of our living beings; we slightly remember our felicities, and the smartest strokes of affliction leave but short smart upon us. Sense endureth no extremities, and sorrows destroy us or themselves. To weep into stones are fables. Afflictions induce callosities; miseries are slippery, or fall like snow upon us, which, notwithstanding, is no unhappy stupidity. . . . The Egyptian mummies, which Cambyzes or time hath spared, avarice now consumeth. Mummy is become merchandise; Mizraim cures wounds, and Pharaoh is sold for balsams. . . .

Man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave, solemnising natiivities and deaths with equal lustre, nor omitting ceremonies of bravery in the infancy of his nature.¹

Those whose minds are intent, constantly or mainly, on mere pleasure and gain, on the petty interests of appetite, will here find little to their satisfaction. But the meditations that lead us into the inner chambers of life and death are, if we be rightly attuned, more precious than the positive facts that put money into a man's pocket or actual knowledge into his head. We are more than sentiment—we are rational, we are ethical. The scale of our affinities is indicated by the intellect which seeks to transcend the finite in space and time and truth, by the conscience which owns the infinite in duty and stays itself on the infinite in love. A noble melancholy is the source of every generous passion and of every philosophical discovery.² Whatever depth there may be in our tenderness, whatever reverence in our voice, flows into us from the two eternities.

Another who rises above the din of strife into the region of spiritualities, is **Jeremy Taylor**,³ an Anglican and a Royalist, upright, zealous, tolerant, a sensitive and creative genius, less profound than Browne, but as opulent in resources, warmer, richer, more gorgeous in style. His soul was made for the sublime, the beautiful, and the picturesque. Never was such wealth and sweetness of imagery, or readier perception of analogies in things familiar and fair. He sees the skylark build her nest on

¹*Hydriotaphia, or Urn Burial*; 'a Discourse on the Sepulchral Urns lately found in Norfolk.'

²Melancholy is the genuine inspiration of true genius: whoever is not conscious of this affection of the mind must not aspire to any great celebrity as an author. *Madam de Staël*.

Happy is the country where the authors are melancholy, the merchants satisfied, the rich gloomy. *Ibid.*

³Son of a poor surgeon-barber, entered college at fourteen as a sizar, won his way, married a natural daughter of Charles I, was wrecked in the storm of the Civil War, twice imprisoned, and after the Restoration loaded with honors.

the ground, sees her rise amid the early perfumes of the fields, soaring highest of all the feathered tribe, or breasting the tempest in her upward flight, and compelled to return panting; then he thinks of the good man's spirit, struggling to ascend towards the throne of mercy:

'For so I have seen a lark rising from his bed of grass, and soaring upwards, singing as he rises, and hopes to get to heaven, and climb above the clouds; but the poor bird was beaten back with the loud sighings of an eastern wind, and his motion made irregular and inconstant, descending more at every breath of the tempest, than it could recover by the libration and frequent weighing of his wings; till the little creature was forced to sit down and pant, and stay till the storm was over; and then it made a prosperous flight, and did rise and sing, as if it had learned music and motion from an angel as he passed sometimes through the air, about his ministries here below. So is the prayer of a good man.'

Or his full imagination traces in sensible colors the progress of sin:

'I have seen the little purls of a stream sweat through the bottom of a bank, and intenerate the stubborn pavement, till it hath made it fit for the impression of a child's foot; and it was despised, like the descending pearls of a misty morning, till it had opened its way and made a stream large enough to carry away the ruins of the undermined strand, and to invade the neighboring gardens: but then the despised drops were grown into an artificial river, and an intolerable mischief. So are the first entrances of sin stopped with the antidotes of a hearty prayer, and checked into sobriety by the eye of a reverend man, or the counsels of a single sermon: but when such beginnings are neglected, and our religion hath not in it so much philosophy as to think anything evil as long as we can endure it, they grow up to ulcers and pestilential evils; they destroy the soul by their abode, who at their first entry might have been killed with the pressure of a little finger.'

With like fertility and continuity, he describes the growth of reason:

'We must not think that the life of a man begins when he can feed himself or walk alone, when he can fight or beget his like, for so he is contemporary with a camel or a cow; but he is first a man when he comes to a certain steady use of reason, according to his proportion: and when that is, all the world of men cannot tell precisely. Some are called *at age* at fourteen, some at one and twenty, some never; but all men late enough; for the life of a man comes upon him slowly and insensibly. But, as when the sun approaches towards the gates of the morning, he first opens a little eye of heaven, and sends away the spirits of darkness, and gives light to a cock, and calls up the lark to matins, and by and by gilds the fringes of a cloud, and peeps over the eastern hills, thrusting out his golden horns like those which decked the brow of Moses, when he was forced to wear a veil, because himself had seen the face of God; and still, while a man tells the story, the sun gets up higher, till he shews a fair face and full light, and then he shines one whole day, under a cloud often, and sometimes weeping great and little showers, and sets quickly; so is a man's reason and his life.'

We see that he is a philanthropist, who is not content to have religion a ritual or a dream; with whom the business of life is not to gather gold or get station, but to be a man; not to pass an ephemeral being in a whirl of fashion, but to be a woman; a godly man, who does not spoil the poetic depth of holiness by

reducing its speech to a technical use; a counsellor, who does his work only with thought that it be good, whose marriage—let us hope—was the noble poem, the interior relation, the rudimentary heaven, which he would have it be:

‘They that enter into the state of marriage cast a die of the greatest contingency, and yet of the greatest interest in the world, next to the last throw for eternity. Life or death, felicity or a lasting sorrow, are in the power of marriage. A woman, indeed, ventures most, for she hath no sanctuary to retire to from an evil husband; she must dwell upon her sorrow, and hatch the eggs which her own folly or infelicity hath produced; and she is more under it, because her tormentor hath a warrant of prerogative, and the woman may complain to God, as subjects do of tyrant princes; but otherwise she hath no appeal in the causes of unkindness. And though the man can run from many hours of his sadness, yet he must return to it again; and when he sits among his neighbors, he remembers the objection that lies in his bosom, and he sighs deeply. The boys and the pedlers, and the fruiterers, shall tell of this man when he is carried to his grave, that he lived and died a poor wretched person.

The stags in the Greek epigram, whose knees were clogged with frozen snow upon the mountains, came down to the brooks of the valleys, hoping to thaw their joints with the waters of the stream; but there the frost overtook them, and bound them fast in ice, till the young herdsmen took them in their stronger snare. It is the unhappy chance of many men, finding many inconveniences upon the mountains of single life, they descend into the valleys of marriage to refresh their troubles; and there they enter into fetters, and are bound to sorrow by the chords of a man’s or woman’s peevishness. . . .

Man and wife are equally concerned to avoid all offences of each other in the beginning of their conversation: every little thing can blast an infant blossom; and the breath of the south can shake the little rings of the vine, when first they begin to curl like the locks of a new weaned boy: but when by age and consolidation they stiffen into the hardness of a stem, and have by the warm embraces of the sun and the kisses of heaven, brought forth their clusters, they can endure the storms of the north, and the loud noises of a tempest, and yet never be broken: so are the early unions of an unmixed marriage.’

It is not a cold rigorist who speaks, but a saviour, who feels the sore travail of the world, and esteems nothing greater than by word or deed to minister comfort to a weary or troubled soul:

‘This is glory to thy voice, and employment fit for the brightest angel. But so have I seen the sun kiss the frozen earth, which was bound up with the images of death, and the colder breath of the north; and then the waters break from their inclosures, and melt with joy, and run in useful channels; and the flies do rise again from their little graves in walls, and dance awhile in the air, to tell that there is joy within, and that the great mother of creatures will open the stock of her new refreshment, become useful to mankind, and sing praises to her Redeemer. So is the heart of a sorrowful man under the discourses of a wise comforter.’

He has, like Browne, the stamp of the national spirit, the Northern gloom which, in the days of the *Edda*, was soothed by the roaring of the sea and the hollow blast of the barren heath. For what is the end and sum of mortal designs? A dark night and an ill guide, ‘a boisterous sea and a broken cable,’—a rock and a wreck, while they who weep loudest have yet to enter into the storm. All, fair as the morning, brave as the noon, are the heri-

tage of worms. Go where you may, you tread upon the bones of a dead man. 'Where is the dust that has not been alive?'

'Nature calls us to meditate of death, by those things which are the instruments of acting it; and God by all the variety of His providence, makes us see death everywhere in all variety of circumstances, and dressed up for all the fancies and the expectation of every single person. Nature has given us one harvest every year, but death hath two; and the spring and the autumn send throngs of men and women to charnel-houses: and all the summer long, men are recovering from their evils of the spring, till the dog-days come, and then the Sirian star makes the summer deadly; and the fruits of the autumn are laid up for all the year's provision, and the man that gathers them eats and surfeits, and dies and needs them not, and himself is laid up for eternity; and he that escapes till winter, only stays for another opportunity, which the distempers of that quarter minister to him with great variety. Thus death reigns in all the portions of our time. The autumn with its fruits provides disorders for us, and the winter's cold turns them into sharp diseases, and the spring brings flowers to strew our hearse, and the summer gives green turf and brambles to bind upon our graves.'

The style of all these writers, by its copiousness and pomp, by its redundancies and irregularities, links them to the age of Elizabeth. It has the Elizabethan ardor and the Elizabethan faults. If now we turn to **Cowley**, we shall see, in startling contrast, the powerful and erratic breeze slacken to a smooth and placid equability:

'The first minister of state has not so much business in public as a wise man has in private: if the one have little leisure to be alone, the other has less leisure to be in company: the one has but part of the affairs of one nation, the other all the works of God and Nature under his consideration. There is no saying shooeks me so much as that which I hear very often, that a man does not know how to pass his time.'

Of Oliver Cromwell:

'What can be more extraordinary than that a person of mean birth, no fortune, no eminent qualities of body, which have sometimes, or of mind, which have often, raised men to the highest dignities, should have the courage to attempt, and the happiness to succeed in, so improbable a design as the destruction of one of the most ancient and most solidly founded monarchies upon the earth? that he should have the power or boldness to put his prince and master to an open and infamous death; to banish that numerous and strongly allied family: to do all this under the name and wages of a parliament; to trample upon them, too, as he pleased, and spurn them out of doors when he grew weary of them; to raise up a new and unheard-of monster out of their ashes; to stifle that in the very infancy, and set up himself above all things that ever were called sovereign in England; to oppress all his enemies by arms, and all his friends afterwards by artifice; to serve all parties patiently for a while, and to command them victoriously at last; to overrun each corner of the three nations, and overcome with equal facility both the riches of the south and the poverty of the north; to be feared and courted by all foreign princes, and adopted a brother to the gods of the earth; to call together parliaments with a word of his pen, and scatter them again with the breath of his mouth; to be humbly and daily petitioned, that he would please to be hired, at the rate of two millions a year, to be the master of those who had hired him before to be their servant; to have the estates and lives of three kingdoms as much at his disposal as was the little inheritance of his father, and to be as noble and liberal in the spending of them; and lastly—for there is no end of all the particulars of his glory—to bequeath all this with one word to

¹ Young's *Night Thoughts*.

his posterity; to die with peace at home, and triumph abroad; to be buried among kings, and with more than regal solemnity; and to leave a name behind him not to be extinguished but with the whole world; which, as it is now too little for his praises, so might have been, too, for his conquests, if the short line of his human life could have been stretched out to the extent of his immortal designs.'

This is the mark of a new culture, a new society: it is the model which Temple and Addison will adopt and improve.

History.—The contribution to this department in the first quarter of the century, most valuable as authority and most masterly in execution, is **Bacon's** *Reign of Henry VII.* In the collection of materials, the period was exceedingly active. Volumes of *Antiquities*, *Memoirs*, *Memorials*, *Travels*, contemporary narratives and retrospective treatises, most of which from the literary point of view are worthless, attest the great amount of industry subsidiary to true history. Always liable in all its forms to be partisan, the historical literature of the seventeenth century, as a whole, is violently so. The historian speaks less with the air of a judge than with the gesticulations of an attorney. Indeed, the grave and judicial, ancient or modern, are not altogether unbiased by their sympathies and antipathies. They are prone—let the reader or student remember—to write in the interest of some political party, some social caste, some favorite hero, some *Idol* of the *Tribe*, the *Den*, the *Forum*, or the *Theatre*. There are, also, unmistakable signs that historians were shifting their ground. Thus Selden, the chief of scholars, offended many of the Royalists by his *History of Tithes*, wherein he denied their divine right. Baker compiled a *Chronicle* 'with such care and diligence,' he assures us, 'that if all other chronicles were lost, this only would be sufficient to inform posterity of all passages worthy to be known.' Bacon analyzes motives, weighs actions, examines and describes the laws and events affecting trade and agriculture, with an evident purpose to enable the reader to glean the lessons which may hereafter be turned to useful account. We observe an increasing respect for the human intellect, an indisposition to believe in things strange, merely because they have been believed, and an inclination to take the side of the people, rather than that of the rulers.

Theology.—The persecutions of Galileo, and his recantation, suffice to show that Religion was still considered the arbiter of Science. In England, though creeds did not at once come into

conflict with the general culture, the temper of the nation was intensely theological. 'There is a great abundance of theologians in England,' says a contemporary; 'all point their studies in that direction.' It was a period of distrust and dissension,—of the strife of conservative and radical reform. As the struggle progressed, fanaticism gained ground, faith became more stubborn, divinity more sinister, action and intelligence more restrictive. But—Milton aside—the Episcopalians were not only more talented and scholarly than their opponents, but also more liberal. If, by their alliance with the crown, they were oppressive in politics, they were tolerant in doctrine, more friendly, perhaps, to the large ideas of the Renaissance.

What it is chiefly important to observe, is, that the rage of controversy reacted upon the spirit of insubordination that was abroad, and tended to the rapid increase of heresy. In 1647, Boyle writes from London:

'There are few days pass here that may not justly be accused of the brewing or broaching of some new opinion. Nay, some are so studiously changing in that particular, they esteem an opinion as a diurnal, after a day or two scarce worth the keeping. If any man have lost his religion, let him repair to London, and I'll warrant him he shall find it. I had almost said too,—if any man has a religion, let him but come hither now, and he shall go near to lose it.'

Each sect proclaimed its contempt of tradition and the efficiency of reason. Hales, the 'ever-memorable,' declared that he would quit the Church of England to-morrow if she insisted on the damnation of dissenters. He advised men to trust to themselves alone in religious matters. Of the authority of the Fathers and of Councils, he said briefly, 'It is none.' Universality is no conclusive test. It 'is such a proof of truth as truth itself is ashamed of. The most singular and strongest part of human authority is properly in the wisest and most virtuous, and these, I trow, are not the most universal.' **Chillingworth**, a militant and Royalist, of strong and subtle intellect, asserted the insecurity of any basis for belief but that of private judgment. No man is bound to believe the points at issue between the Catholics and Protestants if he finds them repugnant to reason. 'God requires only that we believe the conclusion as much as the premises deserve.' Nothing can be more detrimental to religion than to force it. 'For my part, I am certain that God hath given us our reason to discern between truth and falsehood; and he that makes not this use of it, but believes things he knows not why, I say it is by

chance that he believes the truth, and not by choice; and I can not but fear that God will not accept of this sacrifice of fools.' The great principle of religious toleration is clearly implied in this, if it is not clearly expressed in what follows:

'This deifying our own interpretations and tyrannous enforcing them upon others; this restraining of the word of God from that latitude and generality, and the understandings of men from that liberty wherein Christ and His apostles left them, is and hath been the only foundation of all the schisms of the Church and that which makes them immortal.'

But the first famous plea for tolerance, on a solid and comprehensive basis, was **Taylor's** *Liberty of Prophesying*. That freedom of conscience which the Puritan founded on the personal communion of each soul with God, is here founded on the weakness of authority and the infirmity of reason. The Apostle's Creed comprises all that can be absolutely proven, and therefore all that is fundamental. All errors beyond do not affect salvation, and hence ought not to be punished. The magistrate, however, must see to the safety of the commonwealth, and put down, if necessary, those religions whose principles destroy government, as well as 'those religions—if there be any such—which teach ill life.'

Among Puritans, the Independents allowed the greater latitude. Milton deemed persecution, in defense of truth, inexcusable: 'For truth is strong next to the Almighty. She needs no policies or stratagems or licensings to make her victorious. These are the shifts and the defences that error uses against her power.' The Presbyterians desired to tolerate only those who accepted the 'fundamentals' of Christianity, and drew up a list which formed as elaborate and exclusive a test as the Anglican articles which they rejected. They tried in 1648 to induce Parliament to enact that any one who advocated views contrary to the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation, should be punished with death, and all who taught Popish, Arminian,¹ Baptist, or Quaker doctrines, should be imprisoned for life. Catholicism, indeed, was by all sectaries ruthlessly proscribed; but the nation, it is evident, was advancing towards religious liberty. It must not be forgotten that this great process—yet far from being completed in any country—was begun by the union of the spirit of Christianity

¹ A scheme of Arminius, a Dutch theologian, who died in 1608. It arose by way of reaction against the predestinarianism of Calvin.

with the spirit of scepticism. He who has learned to doubt has learned to tolerate. They who have recognized the fallibility of their own opinions, cease to dream that guilt can be associated with an honest conclusion.

Ethics.—When dogmatism declines, we may be sure that men are interrogating their moral sense more than the books of theologians, and that they will soon proceed to make that sense a supreme arbiter. While the period offers nothing that can be reckoned a treatise, much less a system, of moral philosophy, indications are not wanting that conditions were rapidly maturing for the examination, analysis, and classification of moral feelings on a rationalistic basis. **Bacon**, without attempting a scheme, calls attention to the insufficient treatment of Ethics, and suggests the double line of investigation—*theory* and *practice*:

‘The main and primitive division of moral knowledge seemeth to be into the exemplar or platform of good, and the regimen or culture of the mind: the one describing the nature of good; the other presenting rules how to subdue, apply, and accommodate the will of man thereunto.’

The ‘platform’ seems to consist in seeking the good of the whole—or the greatest good of the greatest number. He contributes several passages, moreover, to the rising issues touching the rights of belligerents. We also meet with allusions, reflections, precepts, counsels, in Feltham’s *Resolves*, Berkin’s *Cases of Conscience*, Selden’s *Table Talk*, and **Browne’s Christian Morals**. The aim of these writers is not to inquire into the principles of action, but rather to enforce the duties of practical religion. We quote briefly from the last:

‘Live by old ethicks and the classical rules of honesty. . . . Think not that morality is ambulatory; . . . that virtues, which are under the everlasting seal of right reason, may be stamped by opinion. And therefore though vicious times invert the opinions of things, and set up new ethics against virtue, yet hold thou unto old morality; and rather than follow a multitude to do evil, stand like Pompey’s pillar conspicuous by thyself, and single in integrity. And since the worst of times afford imitable examples of virtue; since no deluge of vice is like to be so general but more than eight will escape; eye well those heroes who have held their heads above water, who have touched pitch and not been defiled, and in the common contagion have remained uncorrupted.’

And:

‘Live happy in the Elysium of a virtuously composed mind, and let intellectual contents exceed the delights wherein mere pleasnrists place their paradise. Bear not too slack reins upon pleasure, nor let complexion or contagion betray thee unto the exorbitancy of delight. Make pleasure thy recreation or intermissive relaxation, not thy Diana, life and profession. . . . Our hard entrance into the world, our miserable going out of it, our sicknesses, disturbances, and sad rencounters in it, do clamorously tell us we come not into the world to run a race of delight.’

Again:

‘Lastly, if length of days be thy portion, make it not thy expectation. Reckon not upon long life; think every day the last, and live always beyond thy account. He that so often surviveth his expectation lives many lives, and will scarce complain of the shortness of his days. Time past is gone like a shadow; make time to come present. Approximate thy latter times by present apprehensions of them; be like a neighbour unto the grave, and think there is but little to come. And since there is something of us that will still live on, join both lives together, and live in one but for the other. He who thus ordereth the purposes of this life will never be far from the next.’

That moral instruction has been secularized, constitutes an important advance towards the exploration of the nature and foundation of morals.

Science.—As poetry languished, science rose, a second creation which continued the first. What one had represented, the other proceeded to observe, to analyze, and to classify. On the Continent, the discoveries of **Galileo** established the Copernican theory of the universe. Summoned before the Inquisition, he was forced to kneel in the sackcloth of a penitent, and swear with his hands upon the gospels, that ‘it was not true that the earth moved round the sun, and that he would never again in words or writing spread this damnable heresy.’ ‘And yet,’ he immediately whispered to a friend, ‘it *does* move.’ In 1609, he had constructed his telescope, and, applying it to the heavens, had excited the strongest interest by revealing the inequalities of the moon’s surface, the moon-like phases of Venus, the satellites of Jupiter, and the ring of Saturn. Space was thus seen to be very different from what the ancients had imagined. Men were led to suspect that it contained a mechanism more various and more vast than had ever been conjectured. **Kepler** took up the notion of a physical connection among celestial bodies, and arrived at three laws the most magnificent which the whole expanse of human knowledge can show: *that the planets move round the sun in ellipses; that they describe equal areas about their centres in equal times; that the squares of their periodic times are proportional to the cubes of their distances.* Why they so moved, or how their motions were maintained, he also endeavored to explain. It was assumed that a current of fluid matter circulated round the sun, and carried them with it, like a boat in a stream, or straws in a whirlpool. The true explanation was to be the glory and merit of Newton. The theory of vortices,—put forward more distinctly and elaborately by

Descartes,—though it is now known to have no scientific value, has a mental value of the highest order: for (1) it reminds us again that the complete disclosure of a new truth by the principal discoverer is preceded by guesses, trials, and glimpses; and (2) it introduced the conception of natural law into what had long been the special realm of superstition.

In England, the intellectual impulse was in the same direction. Weeds and the grain often thrive and flourish together, but if **Bacon** set aside with scorn the astronomical system of Copernicus, he was the first to impress upon mankind at large, the power and importance of physical research. ‘Through all those ages,’ he says, ‘wherein men of genius or learning principally or even moderately flourished, the smallest part of human industry has been spent on natural philosophy, though this ought to be esteemed as the great mother of the sciences; for all the rest, if torn from the root, may perhaps be polished and formed for use, but can receive little increase.’ Many were undecided, Milton among others:

‘What if seventh to these
The planet earth, though steadfast she seem,
Insensibly three different motions move?’

And:

‘What if the sun
Be centre to the world; and other stars,
By his attractive virtue and their own
Incited, dance about him various rounds?’

His leaning, however, seems to have been for the new:

‘Or she from west her silent course advance
With inoffensive pace, that spinning sleeps
On her soft axle, while she paces even,
And bears thee soft with the smooth air along?’

Many were knocking at the door which another and a later was to force open. In 1638 a book appeared with the title, *The Discovery of a New World*; two years afterward, a *Discourse concerning a New Planet*. The art of numerical calculation made inestimable progress by means of **Napier’s** invention of Logarithms, without which the sciences in which the most splendid triumphs have been achieved, could never have been carried to the height they have reached. The circulation of the blood had been partially anticipated. **Harvey** completed the doctrine, demonstrated and announced it. It encountered as much popular as professional odium; but like the heliocentric doctrine,—

‘Untamed its pride, unchecked its course,
From foes and wounds it gathers force.’

This was the beginning of a revolution in medicine. In the ferment of the Civil War, some speculative persons formed themselves into a club, which they called the Invisible College, and met once a week, sometimes in London, sometimes in Oxford, according to the changes of fortune and residence of members. ‘Our business,’ says one of them, ‘precluding affairs of state and questions of theology, was to consider philosophical subjects, and whatever related thereto,—physic, anatomy, geometry, astronomy, navigation, statics, magnetism, chemistry, mechanics, and natural experiments, with the state of these studies as then cultivated at home or abroad.’

A witness to the resistless tendencies of the age, is the celebrated work of **Sir Thomas Browne**—*Inquiries into Vulgar and Common Errors*. His enumeration of errors to be dispelled exemplifies the notions which prevailed:

‘That crystal is nothing else but ice strongly congealed; that a diamond is softened or broken by the blood of a goat; that a pot full of ashes will contain as much water as it would without them; that bays preserve from the mischief of lightning and thunder; that an elephant hath no joints; that a wolf, first seeing a man, begets a dumbness in him; that moles are blind; that the flesh of peacocks corrupteth not; that storks will only live in republics and free states; that the chicken is made out of the yolk of the egg; that men weigh heavier dead than alive; that the forbidden fruit was an apple; that there was no rainbow before the Flood; that John the Evangelist should not die.’

‘Many others there are,’ he adds, ‘which we resign unto divinity, and perhaps deserve not controversy.’ We are here informed that one main cause of error is ‘adherence unto authority’; that another is ‘neglect of inquiry’; that a third is ‘credulity.’ All which is confirmatory of that vast social and intellectual movement which we have seen sweep away the institutions that vainly attempted to arrest it, and which was steadily introducing a new series of conceptions into every province of speculative and practical life.

Philosophy.—The sterile empire of scholasticism was at an end. The sound of great names had lost its omnipotent charm. Speculators felt the need of a law and a law-giver to methodize the discordant elements, but pursued no determinate course, while pretenders struggled for the vacant throne. At this juncture a leader appeared—**Francis Bacon**, who set aside the traditions of the past, separated philosophy from theology, and in

a large and noble temper called the attention of mankind to the power and importance of experimental research. While his own researches lay chiefly in the domain of physical science, yet the *spirit* of his method—slow and patient investigation—was one which applied equally to the whole realm of knowledge. More clearly than any other, he saw where the error of the ancients lay,—in making the largest generalizations first, without the aid or warrant of rigorous inductive methods, and applying them deductively without verification. But the revolt from this waste of intelligence, as well as his ignorance of mathematical knowledge, blinded him to the real value of deduction as an instrument of discovery.¹ His influence, however, especially on the development of science, was decisive, if not immediate. His fundamental maxim—excellent though not without its dangers—suited the English positive, practical genius,—that philosophy should begin in observation and end in art:

‘In the same manner as we are cautioned by religion to show our faith by our works, we may freely apply the principle to philosophy, and judge of it by its works, accounting that to be futile which is unproductive, and still more, if instead of grapes and olives it yield but the thistles and thorns of dispute and contention?’

What is that world? What is man? What is the origin of knowledge? What are its limits? How can it be increased? From what principles must we start? What methods are we to employ? What rule shall we deduce for the conduct of life? To answer these questions is the dark problem of metaphysics, to which Bacon, from the bent of his genius, was no way addicted. On the continent a Frenchman, **Descartes**, gave an answer which, while it has ceased to be satisfactory, formed the starting-point of much English speculation, though he himself made no distinguished disciples among English thinkers. Turning the mental vision inward, as Bacon turned it outward, he watched the operations of the soul, as an object in a microscope. Resolved to believe nothing but upon evidence so convincing that he could not by any effort refuse his assent, he found, as he inspected his beliefs, that he could plausibly enough doubt everything but his own existence. Here at last was the everlasting rock, and

¹ Mechanics, astronomy, optics, acoustics, involve a deductive element. Each supposes the law to be so and so, that is, devises an hypothesis, and inquires what consequences will follow, always with the design of trying such results by facts, and adopting the hypothesis only when it can stand the test. From a principle thus established a multitude of truths are deduced by the mere application of geometry and algebra.

this was revealed in his own *Consciousness*. Hence his famous *Cogito, ergo sum,—I think, therefore I am*. Consciousness, said he, is the basis of certitude. Interrogate it, and its clear replies will be science; *for all clear ideas are true*. Down in the depths of self, he tells you, is the distinct immutable idea of the Infinite Perfection—the mark of the workman impressed upon his work; therefore, *God exists*. This fact established, the veracity of our faculties is guaranteed; for an Infinite and Perfect Being would not so constitute His creatures that they should be always and essentially deceived. His method of ascent to the basis of truth was inductive; thenceforth, from that irreversible Certainty, it was deductive. He was greatest in that in which Bacon was least,—mathematics. The latter argued from effects to causes; the former *deduced* effects from causes—explaining the phenomena of sense by those of intuition. The one used experiment to *verify* an *a priori* conception; the other, to *form* conceptions.

Against the prosaic, earthy temper of the next period, when Philosophy shall turn her face earthward, the mind be plotted out into real estate, and grandeur become a thing unknown, let us hold in remembrance the sublime words of **Sir Thomas Browne** on the true dignity and destiny of man as the highest sublunary object of our theoretical and moral interest. This poet-philosopher shall give us the last accents of the great Elizabethan age:

‘For the world, I count it not an inn but an hospital, and a place, not to live but to die in. The world that I regard is myself; it is the microcosm of my own frame that I cast mine eye on; for the other, I use it but like my globe, and turn it round sometimes for my recreation. . . . The earth is a point not only in respect of the heavens above us, but of that heavenly and celestial part within us; that mass of flesh that circumscribes me limits not my mind; that surface that tells the heavens it hath an end cannot persuade me I have any: . . . whilst I study to find how I am a microcosm or little world, I find myself something more than the great. There is surely a piece of divinity in us, something that was before the elements and owes no homage unto the sun. Nature tells me I am the image of God, as well as Scripture: he that understands not thus much, hath not his introduction or first lesson, and is yet to begin the alphabet of man.’

Résumé.—The opinions and feelings that had been growing up in the bosom of private families now manifested themselves in Parliamentary debates, then overturned the throne, and instituted the Commonwealth. Against the loyal enthusiasm of English gentry, and the fierce licentiousness of Royalist reprobates, were arrayed the valor, the policy, and the public spirit of the

Puritans, with their severe countenance, precise garb, petty scruples, and affected accent. Out of the struggle sprang into organized existence two great parties,—standing the one for political tradition, the other for political progress; the one for religious conformity, the other for religious liberty.

In the drama, the noonday of Shakespeare was followed by the afternoon flush of Jonson, the delineator of *humors*, and a semi-classic in taste; of Beaumont and Fletcher, luxuriating in irregularity of form, and heralding the sensual excess that ended in the violent extinction of the art; of Massinger, Ford, and the rest of that bright throng, whose final and almost solitary successor was Shirley.

Having reached the limit of its expansion, the poetic bloom withered. The serious temper, the blast of strife, the ascetic gloom, accelerated the decay which natural causes began. The agreeable replaced the forceful; and the pretty, the beautiful. Donne founded the fantastic or metaphysical school, marked by the love of quaint phrases, strange analogies, and ambitious efforts at antithesis. Poets lost the romantic fervor without gaining the classic grace. Yet in this exhausted soil, the old sap, lost to the eye, sent up one more of its most vigorous products. Prose was unexampled in vigor and amount; most of it—in particular during the Civil War—political and theological, inspired by the rage of sects and factions, meant for the ravenous appetites of the moment, and therefore ephemeral. A few notable books—like the *Areopagitica* of Milton, those of Taylor, the Spenser of theology, of Bacon, the diviner in science, and of Browne, the dreamer of Norwich—glow with the colored lights and the heart of fire which give to the productions of genius enduring life. Style was copious, even to redundancy; ornate, even to intemperance; not seldom pedantic, with blemishes of vulgarity and tediously prolonged periods. We do not look for grace in Leviathans, nor for urbanity in mastodons.

The scholastic dynasty, which had survived revolutions, empires, religions, and languages, was fallen. Into the ensuing anarchy Bacon introduced the principle of order, and furnished to liberated thought a chart and compass. His preëminent service was his classification of the *Idola*, and his constant injunction to correct theory by confronting it with facts. In him, and in

Descartes of France, modern philosophy may be said to originate, inasmuch as they were the first to make the doctrine of method a principal object of consideration.

Literary eras have no arbitrary or precise bounds. They are discriminated by centres and directions, by a certain set of influences affecting the public mind and character during a more or less definite time, to be succeeded by a new set producing a new phase of the nation's literature. The characteristic tendencies which stretch across them are denoted by persons scattered through them, as the mountain trend is determined by its isolated peaks. The poetic conception of the world, as distinguished from the mechanical, may be taken as the dominant mark of the so-called Elizabethan Age, first clearly defined in Spenser, rising to its zenith in Shakespeare, and passing away in Milton — last of the famed race who slaked the thirst of their souls at the springs of imagination and faith.

J O N S O N .

Then Jonson came, instructed from the school,
To please in method, and invent by rule;
His studious patience and laborious art
By regular approach essay'd the heart.—*Samuel Johnson.*

Many were the wit-combats betwixt Shakspeare and Ben Jonson, which two I beheld like a Spanish great galleon and an English man-of-war. Master Jonson, like the former, was built far higher in learning; solid but slow in his performances. Shakspeare, with the English man-of-war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds by the quickness of his wit and invention.—*Fuller.*

Biography.—Born in Westminster, in 1574, a few days after the death of his father, who was a clergyman; attracted the attention of Camden, who sent him to school, where he made extraordinary progress; entered Cambridge at sixteen, but was shortly recalled by his step-father, a bricklayer, who set him to the trowel; ran away, enlisted, fought in the Netherlands, killed a man in single combat in the view of both armies; returned to England at the age of nineteen, with a roistering reputation and an empty purse; turned to the stage for a livelihood, and failed; quarrelled with a fellow-performer, and slew him in a duel, was

arrested for murder, imprisoned, almost brought to the gallows; was released, and immediately married a woman as poor as himself—a wife whom he afterwards described as ‘a shrew yet honest’; was forced again to the stage both as an actor and a writer, beginning his dramatic career by doing job-work for the managers; sprang into fame in his twenty-second year, proclaimed himself a reformer of the drama, assumed an imperious attitude, railed at his rivals, and made bitter enemies, against whom he struggled without intermission to the end; excited the king’s anger by an irreverent allusion to the Scotch, was in danger of mutilation, but was set at liberty without a trial; amid feasting and rejoicing, his mother showed him a poison which she had intended to put into his drink, to save him from the disgraceful punishment, and ‘to show that she was not a coward,’ says Jonson, ‘she had resolved to drink first’; received the appointment of Poet Laureate, with a pension of a hundred marks, which was subsequently advanced to a hundred pounds by Charles I. His latter days were dark and painful. For twelve years he battled with want and disease. His pockets had holes, and his money failed. Still obliged to write in order to live, he wrote when his pen had lost its vigor and lacked the charm of novelty. Scurvy increased, paralysis came, and dropsy. In the epilogue to the *New Inn* (1630), he appeals to the audience:

‘If you expect more than you had to-night,
The maker is sick and sad. . . .
All that his faint and falt’ring tongue doth crave,
Is, that you not impute it to his brain,
That’s yet unhurt, altho’ set round with pain
It cannot long hold out.’

Deprived of Court patronage, he was forced to beg, first from the Lord Treasurer, then from the Earl of Newcastle. Shattered, drivelling, and suffering, he died in August, 1637,—alone, served by an old woman; and was buried, in an upright posture, in the Poet’s Corner of the Abbey. A workman, hired for eighteen pence by the charity of a passer-by, carved into the simple stone over his grave the laconic inscription:

‘O RARE BEN JONSON!’

Appearance.—Big and coarsely framed, of wide and long face, early marred by scurvy, square jaw, enormous cheeks, thick lips, with a ‘mountain belly’ and an ‘ungracious gate’; a pon-

derous athlete, of free and boisterous habits, built up out of beef and Canary wine, for action and for endurance. His life and manners were in harmony with his person.

Writings.—We perceive at once the introduction of a new model,—art subjected strictly to the laws of classical composition. The understanding of the artist is solid, strong, penetrating, assertive; his mind, extensively furnished from experience and from books; his memory, retentive and exact, crowded with technical details and learned reminiscences. It is not for him to imitate, but to be imitated. He has a doctrine, which he expounds with Latin regularity. He will be loyal to culture, and therefore observes the unities. His plot shall be a diagram, the incidents rapid and natural; and you may see the dramatic effect, perceptible to every reader, rise to a climax by a continuous and uniform ascent. You have seen greater spontaneity, finer sympathy, finer fancy, a more genial spirit of enjoyment, but never such preoccupation of rule and method; above all, such power of working out an idea to a painful and oppressive issue, such persistency of thirst to unmask folly and punish vice. A character, with him, is but an incorporated idea,—a leading feature, conceit, or passion, produced on the stage in a man's dress,—which masters the whole nature, and which the personages combine to illustrate. At twenty-two, having exulted in his own exploits on the field, he writes *Every Man in his Humour*, to clothe in flesh and blood a colossal coward and braggart,—Bobadil, who swears 'by the body of Cæsar,' or 'by the foot of Pharaoh,' or, more terrifically still, 'by my valor!' His proposal for the pacification of Europe is famous:

'I will tell you, sir, by the way of private, and under seal, I am a gentleman, and live here obscure, and to myself; but were I known to her majesty and the lords (observe me), I would undertake, upon this poor head and life, for the public benefit of the state, not only to spare the entire lives of her subjects in general, but to save the one-half, nay, three-parts, of her yearly charge in holding war, and against what enemy soever. And how would I do it, think you! . . . Why, thus, sir. I would select nineteen more, to myself, throughout the land; gentlemen they should be of good spirit, strong and able constitution; I would choose them by an instinct, a character that I have: and I would teach these nineteen the special rules,—as your punto, your reverso, your stoccata, your imbroccato, your passado, your montanto,—till they could all play very near, or altogether, as well as myself. This done, say the enemy were forty thousand strong, we twenty would come into the field the tenth of March, or thereabouts; and we would challenge twenty of the enemy; they could not in their honour refuse us; well, we would kill them; challenge twenty more, kill them; twenty more, kill them; twenty more, kill them too; and thus would we kill every man his twenty a day, that's twenty score;

twenty score, that's two hundred; two hundred a day, five days a thousand; forty thousand; forty times five, five times forty, two hundred days kills them all up by computation. And this will I venture my poor gentleman-like carcass to perform, provided there be no treason practiced upon us, by fair and discreet manhood; that is, civilly by the sword.'

It is affectation and bluster grown to egregious excess. So in the *Alchemist*, Sir Epicure Mammon, in public and alone, expatiates continually in gigantic fancies of luxury and sensuality. Hear him unfold the vision of splendors and debauchery into which he will plunge when, by the possession of the philosopher's stone, he has learned to make gold:

'I assure you
 He that has once the flower of the Sun,
 The perfect ruby, which we call elixir, . . .
 Can confer honour, love, respect, long life;
 Give safety, valour, yea, and victory,
 To whom he will. In eight and twenty days
 I'll make an old man of fourscore a child, . . .
 I will have all my beds blown up, not stuff'd:
Down is too hard. My mists
 I'll have of perfume, vapored 'bout the room
 To lose ourselves in; and my baths, like pits,
 To fall into: from whence we will come forth,
And roll us dry in gossamer and roses.—
 Is it arriv'd at ruby?—And my flatterers
 Shall be the pure and *gravest of divines*.
 And they shall fan me with ten ostrich tails
 Apiece, made in a plume to gather wind.
 We will be brave, Puffe, now we have the med'cine
My meat shall all come in, in Indian shells,
 Dishes of agate, set in gold, and studded
 With emeralds, sapphires, hyacinths, and rubies,
 The tongues of carps, dormice, and camel's heels,
 Boil'd in the spirit of sol, *and dissolv'd pearl,*
 Apicius' diet 'gainst the epilepsy:
 And I will eat these broths with spoons of amber,
 Headed with diamond and carbuncle.
 My foot-boy shall eat pheasants, calver'd salmons,
 Knots, godwits, lampreys: I myself will have
 The beards of barbels serv'd, instead of salads;
 Oil'd mushrooms; and the swelling, unctuous paps
 Of a fat pregnant sow, newly cut off,
Drest with an exquisite and poignant sauce,
For which I'll say unto my cook, "There's gold;
Go forth, and be a knight." . . .

My shirts
 I'll have of taffeta-sarsnet, soft and light
 As cobwebs; and for all my other raiment,
 It shall be such as might provoke the Persian,
 Were he to teach the world riot anew.
 My gloves of fishes' and birds' skins, perfum'd
With gums of Paradise and eastern air.'

Or the dominant trait assumes the form of a mental eccentricity, bordering on madness, as in *The Silent Woman*. Morose is an old citizen who has a horror of noise, but loves to talk. He discharges his servant whose shoes creaked. The new one wears slippers soled with wool, and speaks only in a whisper through a tube; but even the whisper is finally forbidden, and he is made to reply by signs. Further, Morose is rich; and has a nephew, witty but penniless, who, in revenge for all his treatment, finds him a supposed silent woman, the beautiful Epicene. Morose, enchanted by her brief replies and nearly inaudible voice, marries her, with a view to disinherit his nephew who has laughed at his infirmity. The ceremony is no sooner over than she turns out a very shrew:

‘Why, did you think you had married a statue? or a motion only? one of the French puppets, with the eyes turn’d with a wire? or some innocent out of the hospital, that would stand with her hands thus, and a playse mouth, and look upon you?’

She directs the valets to speak louder; opens wide the doors to her friends, who arrive in troops and overwhelm him all at once with congratulations, questions, and counsels. Here comes one with a band of music, who play suddenly, to their utmost volume. Now a procession of menials, with clattering dishes, a whole tavern. Amid the shouts of revelry, the din of trumpet and drum, Morose flees to the top of the house, puts ‘a whole nest of night-caps’ on his head and stuffs his ears. In vain. The racket increases. The house is turned into a thunder factory. ‘Rogues, hell-hounds, Stentors! . . . They have rent my roof, walls, and all my windows asunder with their brazen throats!’ Goaded to desperation, he casts himself on the guests with his long sword, looking like a maniac; chases the musicians, breaks their instruments, and disperses the gathering amid indescribable uproar. Afterwards, he is pronounced mad, and they discuss his alleged insanity before him. They jingle in his ear most barbarous words, consider the books which he must read aloud for his cure, assure him that his wife talks in her sleep, and snores dreadfully. ‘O, redeem me, fate; redeem me, fate,’ he cries in his extremity. ‘For how many causes may a man be divorced?’ he asks of his nephew, who replies, like a clever rascal, ‘Allow me but five hundred during life, uncle, and you are free.’ Morose accepts the proposition eagerly, joyfully; and his nephew then shows him that Epicene is no woman — only a boy in disguise.

In sensual Venice, queen city of vices and of arts, he finds a magnificent cheat, and hounds him to a merited retribution in *Volpone*. Never was such ignoble lust of gold, such shameless artistry in guile, such debasement to evil and the visibly vile. The fearful picture is flashed upon us at the outset, when Volpone says:

'Good morning to the day, and next, my gold:
Open the shrine, that I may see my saint!'

Then:

'Hail the world's soul, and mine! . . .
O thou son of God,
But brighter than thy father, let me kiss,
With adoration, thee, and every relic
Of sacred treasure in this blessed room!'

Childless and without relations, he has many flatterers who hope to be his heir; and he plays the invalid to encourage their gifts. First Voltore arrives, bearing a huge piece of precious plate. Volpone has cast himself on the bed and buried himself in wraps, coughing as if at the point of death:

'I thank you, signior Voltore,
Where is the plate? mine eyes are bad. . . . Your love
Hath taste in this, and shall not be unanswered. . . .
I cannot now last long. . . . I feel me going,—
Uh, uh, uh, uh!'

He is exhausted, his eyes close; and Voltore inquires of his parasite, Mosca: 'Am I inscribed his heir for certain?'—

'Are you?
I do beseech you, sir, you will vouchsafe
To write me i' your family. All my hopes
Depend upon your worship. I am lost
Except the rising sun do shine on me.
Vol. It shall both shine and warm you, Mosca.
M. Sir,
I am a man, that hath not done your love
All the worst offices: here I wear your keys,
See all your coffers and your caskets lockt,
Keep the poor inventory of your jewels,
Your plate and moneys; am your steward, sir,
Husband your goods here.
Vol. But am I sole heir?
M. Without a partner, sir, confirm'd this morning:
The wax is warm yet, and the ink scarce dry
Upon the parchment.
Vol. Happy, happy me!
By what good chance, sweet Mosca?
M. Your desert, sir;
I know no second cause.'

The second is a deaf old miser, Corbaccio, hobbling on the verge of the grave, yet trusting to survive Volpone, whom he is joyed to find more ill than himself:

- C.* How does your patron? . . .
M. His mouth
 Is ever gaping, and his eyelids hang.
C. Good.
M. A freezing numbness stiffens all his joints,
 And makes the color of his flesh like lead.
C. 'Tis good.
M. His pulse beats slow, and dull.
C. Good symptoms still.
M. And from his brain—
C. I conceive you, good.
M. Flows a cold sweat, with a continual rheum,
 Forth the resolved corners of his eyes.
C. Is't possible? Yet I am better, ha!
 How does he with the swimming of his head
M. O, sir, 'tis past the scotomy, he now
 Hath lost his feeling, and hath left to snort:
 You hardly can perceive him, that he breathes.
C. Excellent, excellent, sure I shall outlast him:
 This makes me young again, a score of years.'

He is reminded that Voltore has been here, to forestall him, leaving a splendid token of regard; but:

- 'See, Mosca, look,
 Here, I have brought a bag of bright cecchines,
 Will quite weigh down his plate. . . .
M. Now, would I counsel you, make home with speed,
 There, frame a will; whereto you shall inscribe
 My master your sole heir. . . .
C. This plot
 Did I think on before. . . .
M. And you so certain to survive him.
C. I.
M. Being so lusty a man.
C. 'Tis true.'

When he is gone, Corvino, a merchant, appears, with an orient pearl and a superb diamond. 'Am I his heir?'—

'Sir, I am sworn, I may not shew the will
 Till he be dead: but here has been Corbaccio,
 Here has been Voltore, here were others too,
 I cannot number 'em, they were so many.
 All gaping here for legacies; but I,
 Taking the vantage of his naming you,
 Signior Corvino, Signior Corvino, took
 Paper, and pen, and ink, and there I ask'd him,
 Whom he would have his heir? Corvino. Who
 Should be executor? Corvino. And,
 To any question he was silent to,
 I still interpreted the nods he made

(Through weakness) for consent: and sent home th' others,
Nothing bequeath'd them, but to cry and curse.

Cor. O my dear Mosca!

Presently he departs; and Volpone, springing up, cries in raptures:

'My divine Mosca!

Thou hast to-day outgone thyself. . . . Prepare
Me music, dances, banquets, all delights;
The Turk is not more sensual in his pleasures,
Than will Volpone.'

He is accused, before the tribunal, of imposture and rape; and the would-be heirs defend him with an incredible energy of lying and open villainy. Then he writes a will in Mosca's favor, has his death reported, conceals himself, and enjoys the looks of those who have just saved him, now stupefied with disappointment. Now is Mosca's moment. He has the will, and demands of Volpone half his fortune. Their dispute exposes the common rascality. The arch villain has outwitted himself, and all are sent to the pillory.

The best testimony to his imagination is *The Sad Shepherd*, an unfinished pastoral drama, more poetical than dramatic, with nothing low in the comic and nothing inflated in the serious. It were not easy to surpass the charm of the opening lines:

'Here she was wont to go! and here! and here!
Just where those daisies, pinks and violets grow: .
The world may find the Spring by following her;
For other print her airy steps ne'er left:
Her treading would not bend a blade of grass,
Or shake the downy blow-ball from his stalk!
But like the soft west-wind she shot along,
And where she went the flowers took thickest root,
As she had sowed them with her odorous foot!'

And where should we look for a more masterly delineation of that sorceress of evil, the witch?—

'Within a gloomy dimble she doth dwell,
Down in a pit, o'ergrown with brakes and briars
Close by the ruins of a shaken abbey,
Torn with an earthquake down unto the ground,
'Mongst graves and grots, near an old charnel-house, . . .

Where the sad mandrake grows,
Whose groans are dreadful; and dead-numbing night-shade,
The stupefying hemlock, adder's tongue,
And martagan; the shrieks of luckless owls
We hear, *and croaking night-crows in the air!*
Green-bellied snakes, blue fire-drakes in the sky,
And giddy flitter-mice with leather wings!
The scaly beetles, with their habergeons,

That make a humming murmur as they fly!
 There in the stocks of trees, *white fairies do dwell,*
And span-long elves that dance about a pool,
With each a little changeling in their arms!
 The airy spirits play with falling stars,
 And mount the spheres of fire to kiss the moon!
 While she sits reading by the glow-worm's light,
Or rotten wood o'er which the worm hath crept,
 The baneful schedule of her nocent charms.'

Jonson's fame rests chiefly on his comedies, which constitute by far the largest part of his work. His tragedies are men-of-war, stately and heavy. *Sejanus* is distinguished by sustained depth of knowledge and gravity of expression. But more than once, in this and in *Cataline*, nature forces its way through pedantry and erudition. *Cataline's* imprecation is fine:

'It is decreed! Nor shall thy fate, O Rome!
 Resist my vow. Though hills were set on hills,
 And seas met seas, to guard thee, I would through:
 I'd plough up rocks, steep as the Alps, in dust,
 And lave the Tyrrhene waters into clouds,
 But I would reach thy head, thy head, proud city!'

The description of the morning on which the conspirators meet, is powerful and dramatic:

'It is, methinks, a morning full of fate!
 She riseth slowly, as her sullen car
 Had all the weights of sleep and death hung at it.
 She is not rosy-fingered, but swoll'n black!
 Her face is like a water turned to blood,
 And her sick head is bound about with clouds
 As if she threatened night ere noon of day!'

The following is vivid and impressive:

'The rugged Charon fainted,
 And asked a navy rather than a boat,
 To ferry over the sad world that came.
 The maws and dens of beasts could not receive
 The bodies that those souls were frightened from;
 And e'en the graves were fill'd with men yet living,
 Whose flight and fear had mix'd them with the dead.'

Jonson should have written an epic.

Style.—Massive, erudite, concise, compact, equipoised, rotund; in a word, classic. As literal as Shakespeare's is figurative; as studied as Shakespeare's is intuitive and unrestrained. His adversaries asserted that every line cost him a cup of sack. In prose, terse, sharp, swift, biting. In versification, peculiarly smooth and flowing; for this literary leviathan, it strangely appears, has eminently the merits of elegance and grace. What, for example,

could be more lightsome and airy, more artistic, than the proclamation of the Graces, when Venus has lost her son Cupid?—

'Beauties, have you seen this toy,
Called Love, a little boy,
Almost naked, wanton, blind,
Cruel now, and then as kind?
If he be amongst ye, say;
He is Venus' runaway.

She that will but now discover
Where the winged wag doth hover,
Shall to-night receive a kiss,
How or where herself would wish;
But who brings him to his mother
Shall have that kiss, and another.

He hath marks about him plenty;
You shall know him among twenty.
All his body is a fire,

And his breath a flame entire,
That, being shot like lightning in,
Wounds the heart, but not the skin.

At his sight the sun hath turned;
Neptune in the waters burned;
Hell hath felt a greater heat;
Jove himself forsook his seat;
From the centre to the sky
Are his trophies reared high.

Wings he hath, which though ye clip,
He will leap from lip to lip,
Over liver, lights, and heart,
But not stay in any part;
And if chance his arrow misses,
He will shoot himself in kisses.'

Rank.—In the cluster of poets who sing the meditative, aspiring, and romantic life of the period, Jonson is a soloist; next to Shakespeare, a leader,—a leader by profundity of knowledge and vigor of conception, by the dash of the torrent and the force of the flood. Above all, has he the art of development, the habit of Latin regularity. For the first time, a plot is a symmetrical whole, advancing by consecutive deductions; having a beginning, middle, and end, its subordinate actions well ordered, and its leading truth which they combine to elucidate and establish. He is persuaded that he ought to observe the severity and accuracy of the ancients; not, in the same play,—

'Make a child new-swaddled, to proceed
Man, and then shoot up, in one beard and weed,
Past threescore years; or with three rusty swords,
And help of some few foot and half-foot words,
Fight over York and Lancaster's long jars.'

But in this full attainment of form, he fails in completeness of life. He is too much of a theorist, too little of a seer. Given a peculiarity, he can work it out with logical exactness and realistic intensity. That is, he delineates absorbing singularities rather than persons. He thus inverts the true process of characterization, which conceives the 'humour' as an offshoot of the individual. He is English merely, where Shakespeare is cosmopolitan. He is too ponderous and argumentative. His plots, admirable of their kind, are external contrivances of the understanding rather than interior organisms of the imaginative

insight. Depth of passion and winning tenderness are wanting. The energy which should be vital too often becomes mechanical. His point of view is usually or always that of the satirist:

‘My strict hand
Was made to seize on vice, and with a gripe
Squeeze out the humour of such spongy natures,
As lick up every idle vanity.’

And thus, even in the lower levels of comedy, where he is most at home, the critic frequently, consciously or unconsciously, mars the artist. Neither he nor the reader forgets himself. The process is seen, the intention is felt. Calculation strips him of that delicate and easy-flowing imitation which begets hallucination.

Still, if unable to construct characters, variety of learning, clearness of mind, and energy of soul, suffice to depict English manners and to render vice visible and odious. But he is loftier from another side. We have seen how charming, how elegant and refined, this same war-elephant may be when he enters the domain of pure poetry; as in the polished songs and other lyrical pieces sprinkled over his dramas, in the beautiful dream of the *Shepherd*, or the courtly *Masques*, which display the whole magnificence of the English Renaissance. His inequality—great excellences offset by great defects—is in strong contrast with the unebbing fulness and amplitude of the creative Shakespeare. Nevertheless, in his field, in his *genus* of the drama, he stands on the summit of his hill.

Character.—The most obvious qualities of his intellectual nature are weight and force; of his spiritual nature, earnestness and courage. In the classics, accurate and thorough; and on every subject, athirst. He is said to have carried books in his pocket while working at his trade, in order, during leisure moments, to refresh his memory upon favorite passages in the Latin and Greek poets. In method, he was careful and precise:

‘For a man to write well, there are required three necessities:—to read the best authors; observe the best speakers; and much exercise of his own style. In style, to consider what ought to be written, and after what manner; he must first think, and excogitate his matter; then choose his words, and examine the weight of either. Then take care in placing and ranking both matter and words, that the composition be comely; and to do this with diligence and often. No matter how slow the style be at first, so it be labored and accurate; seek the best, and be not glad of the forward conceits, or first words that offer themselves to us, but judge of what we invent, and order what we approve.’

He had moral loftiness. 'Of all styles,' he said, 'he most loved to be named Honest.' To this add resolute self-assertion. The stage was to be improved and exalted. He would guide, not follow, the popular taste. Judge of his energy and purpose:

'With an armed and resolved hand,
I'll strip the ragged follies of the time
Naked as at their birth, . . .
 And with a whip of steel,
Print wounding lashes in their iron ribs.
I fear no mood stamp't in a private brow,
When I am pleas'd t' unmask a public vice.
I fear no strumpet's drugs, nor ruffian's stab,
Should I detect their hateful luxuries.'

He writes correspondently,—as if with his fist. Conscience and vigor, aided by an intrepid self-confidence, commanded esteem, even veneration; his hard-won position strengthened his natural pride; and consciousness of power, with a severe sense of duty, rendered him censorious, magisterial. He thought Donne, ‘for not keeping of accent, deserved hanging’; and Decker was a rogue. He could instruct even Shakespeare. At the Mermaid, he was self-constituted autocrat. His hearers were schoolboys. While other dramatists said to the audience, ‘Please to applaud this,’ Ben said, ‘Now you fools, we shall see if you have sense enough to applaud this!’ Egotistical, overbearing, of sour aspect, he was frank, social, generous, even prodigal. To the last he retained the riotous, defiant color of the brilliant dramatic world through which he fought his way. Like the rest, he lived freely, liberally, and saw the ins and the outs of lust. Drink, always a luxury, became his necessity. He was a frequent visitor of the Apollo, a club in the Old Devil Tavern; wrote rules for it,—*Leges Conviviales*; and penned a welcome over the door to all who approved the ‘true Phabian liquor.’

In a general view, he presents a singular antithesis,—a rugged, gross, and combative aspect, which is the ordinary one, and a fanciful, serene aspect, which is exceptional and separate, occupying, so to speak, a secluded corner in the general largeness. It might seem surprising that the burly giant could become so gracefully *petit* as he appears in previous quotations, and, pre-eminently in the following lightly tripping strophe:

'Have you seen but a bright lily grow
Before rude hands have touched it?

¹ Whipple.

Have you marked but the fall o' the snow
 Before the soil hath smutched it?
 Have you felt the wool of beaver?
 Or swan's down ever?
 Or have smelt o' the bud o' the briar?
 Or the nard in the fire?
 Or have tasted the bag of the bee?
 O so white,—O so soft,—O so sweet is she!'

Influence.—It is believed that his social position was superior to Shakespeare's. With royalty he was familiar. Elizabeth and James admired and employed him. His society was courted by the time-worn and the youthful; and by an inner circle of devotees he was venerated. In his declining days, he was the acknowledged chief of his art, and during the Restoration his reputation as a critic was still second to none. In his own age, his power was similar to that of his massive namesake, Samuel Johnson, in the succeeding century. Swift was to find suggestions in his *Tale of the Tub*. Milton was to go to his masques and odes for some of the elegancies of his own dignified muse. Dryden was to think, erroneously, 'He did a little too much Romanize our tongue.' For reasons given, his readers are now, unhappily and unworthily, relatively few; but, as his good parts are enduring and imperishable, no fame is more secure.

To every soul that is taxed, to every youth that resolves to be eminent, he brings the assurance that manly resistance subdues the opposition of the world; the resolution to surmount an obstacle reduces it one half; before a fearless step, foes will slink away; around perseverance the Graces collect, and at its bidding the laurel comes.

LORD BACON.

Who is there that upon hearing the name of Lord Bacon does not instantly recognize everything of genius the most profound, everything of literature the most extensive, everything of discovery the most penetrating, everything of observation of human life the most distinguishing and refined?—*Burke*.

Biography.—Born in London, in 1561; his father, Sir Nicholas, one of Elizabeth's most sagacious statesmen; his mother, the learned daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke; received his early education under his mother's eye, mixed freely with the wise

and great who were visitors at his home; at thirteen, entered Cambridge University, where his deepest impressions became an inveterate scorn for Aristotle and his followers; left before he was sixteen, without taking a degree, and was sent to France as an attaché of the English ambassador, to learn the arts of statecraft; designed to stay some years abroad, and was studying assiduously when his father's sudden death recalled him, making it incumbent 'to think how to live, instead of living only to think'; applied for office, but his abilities were too splendid, and a jealous uncle 'suppressed' him; took to law, and soon rose to eminence; at twenty-four, obtained a seat in the Commons; was appointed by the queen her counsel extraordinary, but, owing to the secret opposition of his kinsman, was not immediately raised to any office of emolument; loved but lost a rich young widow, and at forty-five married a fair young bride; steadily advanced in fortune after the accession of James, till he reached the post to which he had long aspired—Lord High Chancellor; was accused of accepting bribes in his official capacity, was rudely stripped of all his dignities, sentenced to the Tower during the king's pleasure, and heavily fined; was restored to liberty within forty-eight hours, with a remission of his fine, but permitted to pass the remainder of his days in penury, obscurity, and disgrace, hunted by creditors and vexed by domestic disquiet; died after five years of dishonor, in consequence of a cold induced by an open-air experiment, on a snowy day, to ascertain whether flesh might not be preserved in snow as well as in salt; consoled, in his last hours, by the reflection that 'the experiment succeeded excellently well.'

Intellectual Scheme.—With a just scorn for the trifles which were occupying the followers of Aristotle, Bacon early conceived the dream of converting knowledge from a speculative waste into 'a rich storehouse for the glory of the Creator and the relief of man's estate.' It was the supreme effort of his life to embody this grand conception in the *Instauratio Magna*—the renewal of Science—the Restoration, to man, of the empire of nature. The vast plan, for which many lives would not have sufficed, consisted, in its final form, of six divisions:

1. A survey of the sciences, a summary of all the possessions of the human mind, comprehending 'not only the things already

invented and known, but also those omitted and wanted.' Here occurs the famous but inadequate distribution of learning into *History*, which uses the memory; *Poetry*, which employs the imagination; and *Philosophy*, which requires the reason. Here, in particular, occurs the short but beautiful paragraph which exhausts everything yet offered on the subject of the *bear ideal*:

'Therefore because the acts or wants of true history have not that magnitude which satisfieth the mind of man, poesy feigneth acts and events greater and more heroical; because true history propoundeth the successes and issues of actions, not so agreeable to the merits of virtue and vice, therefore poesy feigns them more just in retribution, and more according to revealed Providence; because true history representeth actions and events more ordinary and less interchanged, therefore poesy indueth them with more rareness, and more unexpected and alternative variations. . . . And therefore it was ever thought to have some participation of divineness, because it doth raise and erect the mind by submitting the show of things to the desires of the mind.'

2. Precepts for the interpretation of nature; 'the science of a better and more perfect use of reason in the investigation of things, and of the true aids of the understanding'; 'a kind of logic, . . . differing from the common logic . . . in three respects,—the end, the order of demonstrating, and the grounds of inquiry.' This, which is but a fragment of what he had promised, is known as the *Novum Organum*, the most admirable of his books, and the chief foundation of his fame. Its first portion enumerates the causes of error, the illusions to which man is subject:

Idols of the Tribe, to which all by common infirmity are liable;

Idols of the Den, such as are peculiar to individuals;

Idols of the Forum, such as arise from the current usage of words;

Idols of the Theatre, springing from Partisanship, Fashion, and Authority.

Its second portion describes and exemplifies the rules for conducting investigations.

3. An extensive collection of facts and observations,—the *Natural History* of any desired class of phenomena,—an immense chart of nature, furnishing the raw material for the application of the new method. But, in fact, an outline of the field to be explored, rather than an exploration; a sketch of what he would do: as, for instance, a complete account of comets, of meteors, of winds, of rain, hail, snow; the facts to be accurately related and distinctly arranged; their authenticity diligently ex-

amined; those that rest on doubtful evidence, to be noted as uncertain, with the grounds of the judgment so formed.

4. A scale of the intellect—a ladder of the understanding—illustrations of the mind's gradual ascent from phenomena to principles,—‘not such examples as we subjoin to the several rules of our method, but *types* and *models*, which place before our eyes the *entire process* of the mind in the discovery of truth, selecting various and *remarkable* instances.’ Only a few introductory pages, however, are contributed.

5. Specimens of the perfect system which he hoped to erect,—provisional anticipations of the whole, ‘hereafter to be verified,’—a sort of scaffolding, to be of use only till the building is finished,—‘the payment of interest till the principal could be raised.’

6. Science in practice—the new philosophy—the magnificent birth. ‘To this all the rest are subservient,—to lay down that philosophy which shall flow from the just, pure, and strict inquiry hitherto proposed.’ But, ‘to perfect this is beyond both our abilities and our hopes; yet we shall lay the foundations of it, and *recommend the superstructure to posterity*.’ ‘Such,’ in the language of Hallam, ‘was the temple which Bacon saw in vision before him: the stately front and decorated pediments, in all their breadth of light and harmony of proportion; while long vistas of receding columns and glimpses of internal splendor revealed a glory that it was not permitted him to comprehend.’ The world we move in, is not the world we think. Only the latter sets aside disturbances, defects, and limitations. There, at least, the seamless heaven is attainable. To the consummation which flees before him as the shadow of his achievement, he gives ‘local habitation’ in the *New Atlantis*, a philosophical romance, in which, with a poet's boldness and a seer's precision, he describes, with almost literal exactness, modern arts, academies, observatories, air-balloons, submarine vessels, discovery of remedies, preservation of food, transmutation of species, and whatever prodigies cannot be proved to lie beyond the mighty magic of time. Here is a college worthy of the name, Solomon's House, ‘the end of whose foundation is the knowledge of causes and the secret motions of things, and the enlarging of the bounds of human empire to the effecting of all things possible.’

His Motive.—The intense conviction that knowledge, in its existing state, was barren of *practical* results,—a waste wilderness in which successive generations had been moving without advancing. He would propose as the end of thought, *fruit*—the discovery of useful truth—victory over nature, not victory in controversy. He would lead men out of a sterile desert, with its deceitful mirage, into a fertile country, with its ample pastures and abiding cities:

‘Is there any such happiness as for a man’s mind to be raised above the confusion of things, where he may have the prospect of the order of nature and error of man? But is this a view of delight only and not of discovery? of contentment and not of benefit? Shall he not as well discern the riches of nature’s warehouse as the beauty of her shop? Is truth ever barren? Shall he not be able thereby to produce worthy effects, and to endow the life of man with infinite commodities?’

His Method.—A different point of arrival requires a different path of travel. To change the goal is to transform the method. ‘It would be an unsound fancy, and self-contradictory, to expect that things which have never yet been done can be done except by means which have never yet been tried.’ The syllogists had fashioned nature according to preconceived ideas, starting from axioms not accurately obtained, and caring more for an opinion than for a truth. But:

‘Syllogism consists of propositions, propositions of words, and words are the signs of notions; therefore, if our *notions, the basis of all*, are confused, and *over-hastily taken from things*, nothing that is built upon them can be firm; whence our *only hope rests upon genuine Induction*.’

Not, however, the perfect induction which would reason that what we can prove of *a, b, c*, and *d* separately, we may properly state as true of *g*, the whole; nor exactly the partial induction which would argue that what is believed true of three of the species, is to be believed as true likewise of the fourth, and hence of the genus: but a *graduated system of helps*, by the use of which an ordinary mind, when started on the right road, might proceed, through successive stages of generality, *with unerring and mechanical certainty*, to the vision of *fruitful* principles. Thus, for every general effect, as heat, we must seek a general condition, so that in producing the condition we may produce the effect. If we find by long and continued experience that the second uniformly succeeds the first, we may conclude, with a high degree of probability, that the connection between them is necessary. But, says Bacon, there is a shorter way to the result.

From the copious *Natural History* which I contemplate, make out as complete and accurate an account of the facts connected with the subject of inquiry, as possible; select, compare, and scrutinize these according to the rules stated in the second book of my *Organum*, and by the same rules conduct your experiments, if experiments are admissible: that is, you are to construct the table of causes from which the effect is absent, the table where it is present, and the table where it is shown in various degrees; then, 'by *fit rejections and exclusions*,' extract the condition sought. Light, for example, is denied to be the cause or *form* of heat, because light is found to be present in the instance of the moon's rays, while heat is absent.

Thus philosophy resembles a compass, with whose aid the novice can draw a better circle or line than the expert can produce without it.

Its Spirit.—A curious piece of machinery, you will say, very subtle, very elaborate, very ingenious. You will suspect, also, that nothing has been accomplished by it; that it has solved no problems. True, but its merit lies in the general advice which developed it, in the wise and eminently scientific spirit which pervades it. To pluck a few illustrations from his string of aphorisms:

'Man, the minister and interpreter of Nature, can act and understand in as far as he has, either in fact or in thought, observed the order of Nature; more he can neither know nor do.'

'The real cause and root of almost all the evils in science is this: *that, falsely magnifying and extolling the powers of the mind*, we seek not its real helps.'

'The human understanding is like an unequal mirror to the rays of things, which, *mixing its own nature with the nature of things, distorts and perverts them*.'

'The understanding, when left to itself, takes the first of these ways; for the mind *delights in springing up to the most general axioms, that it may find rest*; but after a short stay there, *it disdains experience*, and these mischiefs are at length increased by logic, for the ostentation of disputes.'

For the first time, Science is sundered from Metaphysics and Theology, and Physics is constituted 'the mother of all the sciences.' This is eminently *positive*, and hence entirely modern. Nothing could be more thoroughly opposed to antiquity:

'The opinion which men entertain of antiquity is a very idle thing, and almost incongruous to the word; for the old age and length of days of the world should in reality be accounted antiquity, and ought to be attributed to our own times, not to the youth of the world which it enjoyed among the ancients; for that age, though with respect to us it be ancient and greater, yet with regard to the world it was new and less.'

Whence can arise the sterility of the physical systems hitherto in vogue?—

‘It is not, certainly, from any thing in nature itself; for the *steadiness and regularity of the laws by which it is governed, clearly mark them out as objects of precise and certain knowledge.*’

Nor from the want of talent, but from ‘the perverseness and insufficiency of the methods which have been pursued’:

‘Men have sought to make a world from their own conceptions, and to draw from their own minds all the materials which they employed; but if, instead of doing so, they had consulted experience and observation, they would have had *facts.*’

But:

‘As things are at present conducted, a sudden transition is made from sensible objects and particular facts to *general propositions, which are accounted principles*, and round which, as round so many fixed poles, disputation and argument continually revolve.’

Quite the reverse is the way that promises success:

‘It requires that we should *generalize slowly*, going from *particular things* to those that are *but one step more general*; from those to those of still *greater extent*, and so on to such as are *universal*. By such means we may hope to arrive at principles, not vague and obscure, but luminous and well-defined, such as Nature herself will not refuse to acknowledge.’

Its Novelty.—It is already apparent that Bacon understood his method to be original, though he admits that Plato had used a method somewhat akin to his own:

‘The induction which is to be available for the discovery and demonstration of sciences and art must analyse nature by proper rejections and exclusions; and then, after a sufficient number of negatives, come to a conclusion on the affirmative instances, which has not yet been done, or even attempted, save only by Plato.’

Induction, as such, had been defined by Aristotle, though he seems to have regarded it as less important than the syllogism. Roger Bacon had insisted on experience as the truest guide. At this very moment, it was being employed on the Continent, notably by Galileo, in whose dialogues the Aristotelian disputant frequently appeals to observation and experiment. It was latent in the tendencies of the age,—as the steam-engine was latent in the tendencies of the age of Watt. But (1) no one till now had coördinated into a compact body of doctrine all the elements of the Inductive Method, nor (2) had any one even attempted that part in which the author took most pride,—the process of exclusion or rejection.¹

¹Mr. Macaulay is correct when he says: ‘The inductive method has been practised ever since the beginning of the world by every human being. It is constantly practised by the most ignorant clown.’ He is egregiously *incorrect* when he adds that ‘everybody

Its Utility.—Nothing can be more certain than that the inductive sciences have not followed it. No great physicist has used it. No important discovery has been effected by it. It has no present intrinsic value. It has long been superseded by a better. It can be made applicable only when the phenomena of the universe have been tabulated and arranged:

‘It comes, therefore, to this, that my *Organum*, even if it were completed, would not without the *Natural History* much advance the *Instauration of the Sciences*, whereas the *Natural History* without the *Organum* would advance it not a little.’

The true scientific procedure, moreover, is by hypothesis, followed up and tested by verification. Kepler tried twenty guesses on the orbit of Mars, and the last fitted the facts. But the *Organum* does not admit hypotheses as guides to investigation.¹

It was indirectly, however, of inestimable service,—by its general spirit, by its systematization of the new mode of thinking, by the power and eloquence with which it was expounded and enforced. If its details, on which was laid the greatest stress, have not been useful, it was still the basis of the more perfect structure which successors have erected. Induction had been adopted from accident or from taste; it was henceforth to be applied and defended on principle.

Essays.—Bacon’s philosophical writings have operated on mankind through a school of intermediate agents. To the multitude he is best known by the *Essays*, in which he talks to plain men in language intelligible to all, on subjects in which everybody is interested. Never was observation at once more recon-dite, better matured, and more carefully sifted; attractive for the fulness of imagination that draws so many stately pictures, and for the wise reflection that suggests so many wholesome truths. Here are a few sample thoughts for memory and for use—texts for sermons and dissertations, if you will:

is constantly performing the process described in the second book of the *Novum Organum*.’ Here (1) the brilliant essayist confounds simple incautious induction with cautious methodical induction, between which there is as much difference as between instinct and science. (2) In experimental philosophy, to which the rules of the *Organum* especially referred, there was a notorious want of inductive reasoning. (3) Not only had Bacon’s peculiar system of rules never been applied before,—they have never been applied since. Macaulay has had followers, but his argument receives its force solely from a misconception of the Baconian method. Draper (*Intellectual Development of Europe*) is guilty of like confusion when he asserts that the Baconian principles were understood eighteen hundred years before; and of lamentable ignorance when he adds that ‘they were carried into practice.’ Its inaccuracies and partisanship have abated greatly our early enthusiasm for this still valuable work.

¹ Very surprising, after this, is the declaration of Taine: ‘After more than two centuries, it is still to him that we go to discover the theory of what we are attempting and doing.’ The mistake arises from confounding induction with the Baconian *method* of induction.

Of beauty,—

‘Virtue is like a rich stone — best plain set.’

Of happiness,—

‘They are happy men whose natures sort with their vocations.’

Of youth and age,—

‘A man that is young in years may be old in hours, if he have lost no time.’

Of nature in men,—

‘A man’s nature runs either to herbs or weeds; therefore, let him seasonably water the one, and destroy the other.’

Of riches,—

‘A great estate left to an heir, is as a lure to all the birds of prey round about to seize on him, if he be not the better stablished in years and judgment.’

Of friendship,—

‘There is no man that imparteth his joys to his friend, but he joyeth the more; and no man that imparteth his griefs to his friend, but he grieveth the less.’

Of love,—

‘There was never proud man thought so absurdly well of himself as the lover doth of the person loved; and therefore it was well said, “That it is impossible to love and to be wise.”’

Of envy,—

‘He that cannot possibly mend his own case, will do what he can to impair another’s.’

Of marriage,—

‘He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune; for they are impediments to great enterprises, either of virtue or mischief.’

And,—

‘Grave natures, led by custom, and therefore constant, are commonly loving husbands.’

Again,—

‘It is one of the best bonds, both of chastity and obedience, in the wife, if she thinks her husband wise, which she will never do if she find him jealous.’

Of gardens,—

‘God Almighty first planted a garden,—and, indeed, it is the purest of human pleasures; it is the greatest refreshment to the spirits of man; without which buildings and palaces are but gross handyworks; and a man shall ever see, that, when ages grow to civility and elegancy, men come to build stately, sooner than to garden finely; as if gardening were the greater perfection.’

It is by their inexhaustible aliment and illustrative enrichment, that the *Essays* belong most to literature. Few books are more quoted, few are more generally read. ‘These, of all my works,’ says Bacon, ‘have been most current; for that, as it seems, they *come home to men’s businesse and bosomes*.’ He justly foretold that they would ‘live as long as books last.’ Their brief, pithy sayings have passed into popular mottoes and household words, like —

‘Jewels, five words long,
That on the stretched forefinger of all time
Sparkle forever.’

Style.—Clear and strong, elaborate and full of color, replete with images that serve only to concentrate meditation; now in an apothegmatic sentence:

‘A crowd is not company; and faces are but a gallery of pictures; and talk but a tinkling cymbal, when there is no love.’

Now in the majesty of a grand period:

‘For as water, whether it be the dew of Heaven or the springs of the earth, easily scatters and loses itself in the ground, except it be collected into some receptacle, where it may by union and consort comfort and sustain itself (and for that cause, the industry of man has devised aqueducts, cisterns, and pools, and likewise beautified them with various ornaments of magnificence and state, as well as for use and necessity); so this excellent liquor of knowledge, whether it descend from divine inspiration or spring from human sense, would soon perish and vanish into oblivion, if it were not preserved in books, traditions, conferences, and especially in places appointed for such matters, as universities, colleges, and schools, where it may have both a fixed habitation, and means and opportunity of increasing and collecting itself.’

Now in the symmetry of concise and well-balanced antithesis:

‘Crafty men condemn studies; simple men admire them; and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use: that is a wisdom without them, and won by observation. Read not to contradict, nor to believe, but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested. Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man. And therefore if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, have a present wit; and if he read little, have much cunning to seem to know that he doth not. Histories make men wise, poets witty, the mathematics subtle, natural philosophy deep, morals grave, logic and rhetoric able to contend.’

A passage to be *chewed* and *digested*. Always grave, often metaphorical, his style grew richer and softer with increasing years. Not long before his death, he wrote:

‘Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament, adversity is the blessing of the New, which carrieth the greater benediction and the clearer evidences of God’s favour. Yet, even in the Old Testament, if you listen to David’s harp, you shall hear as many hearse-like airs as carols; and the pencil of the Holy Ghost hath laboured more in describing the afflictions of Job than the felicities of Solomon. Prosperity is not without many fears and distastes; and adversity is not without comforts and hopes. We see in needleworks and embroideries it is more pleasing to have a lively work upon a sad and solemn ground, than to have a dark and melancholy work upon a lightsome ground. Judge therefore of the pleasures of the heart by the pleasures of the eye. Certainly virtue is like precious odours, most fragrant when they are incensed or crushed; for prosperity doth best discover vice, but adversity doth best discover virtue.’

Shakespeare, with far greater variety, contains no more vigorous or expressive condensations.

Bacon feared that the modern languages would ‘at one time or another play the bankrupt with books.’ Dreading to trust the

mutability of English, he composed the *Instauratio* in Latin, which fifteen centuries had fixed sacred from innovations; and into the same tongue his vernacular compositions were translated by himself and friends — Jonson, Hobbes, and Herbert.

Rank.—The principal figure in English prose; the most comprehensive, cultivated, and originaive thinker of the age; the master spirit of the long-agitated antagonism to ancient and scholastic thought; the first great exponent of the increasing tendency to positivism; the first to systematize the inductive process, to teach its extensive use, to give it a clear appreciation; and thus the great leader in the reformation of modern science. Not strictly a scientist — rather a scientific philosopher — an expounder of the scientific spirit and method — a surveyor who *broadly* mapped the road — the philosopher more of human than of general nature. He belongs to the realm of imagination, of eloquence, of history, of jurisprudence, of ethics, of metaphysics — the investigation of the powers and operations of the human mind. His writings have the gravity of prose, with the fervor and vividness of poetry; in this, unlike those of the materialistic succession, such as Spencer and Mill; but resembling those of Plato, who was loftier, and of Burke, who was less profound.

Commanding as is his merit, he has perhaps been overrated. The time was ripe. He had better eyes than his fellow-men, and found what others were seeking. More judicial than they, he gave expression to ideas already in the air. The epoch-making genius gathers up in a harmonious vibration a thousand buzzing and swelling voices. He did not thoroughly understand the older philosophy which he attacked, nor accurately anticipate the methods of the new. In banishing deduction, he failed to see that it makes up with induction the double enginery of thought. His circle of observation was external. But within that, are ideas which experience can never furnish — ideas necessary, absolute, eternal; truths which it were madness to deny, folly to attempt to prove, and without which reason could not advance a step, — as, *matter has uniform and fixed laws; qualities imply a substance*. Without an assumption of the first, the simplest process of induction is impossible. He who doubts the second, can make no pretension to the knowledge of spiritual and material essence. Ignorant of geometry, he had no prevision of the

important part that mathematics was to perform in the interpretation of nature. Galileo revived that science, excelled in it, first applied it, and fortified with new proofs the system of Copernicus, which Bacon rejected with positive disdain:

‘In the system of Copernicus there are many and grave difficulties; for the threefold motion with which he encumbers the earth is a serious inconvenience, and the separation of the sun from the planets, with which he has so many affections in common, is likewise a harsh step; and the introduction of so many immovable bodies in nature, as when he makes the sun and stars immovable, the bodies which are peculiarly lucid and radiant, and his making the moon adhere to the earth in a sort of epicycle, and some other things which he assumes, are proceedings which mark a man who thinks nothing of introducing fictions of any kind into nature, provided his calculations turn out well.’

He did not use skilfully his own system. His conjectures in physics, though often acute, are often chimerical, owing to his defective acquaintance with natural phenomena. He saw, from the mountain-top, the Promised Land, pointed it out, but did not enter there. In any special department, he has latterly been excelled by many. There have been thousands of better astronomers, chemists, physicians. But in wide-ranging intellect, in the union of speculative power with practical utility, he has been equalled by none.

Character.—As a boy, he was delicate in health, indifferent to the sports of youth, quick and curious in mind, with that sweet sobriety of manner which led the queen to call him ‘my young Lord Keeper.’ Still in his ‘teens,’ he saw, in dim vision, a philosophic revolution. He solicited employment only that he might have leisure to become a ‘pioneer in the deep mines of truth; not being born under Sol, that loveth honor, nor under Jupiter that loveth business, but being wholly carried away by the contemplative planet.’ At the moment of his greatest elevation, he said: ‘The depth of three long vacations I would reserve in some measure free from business of estate, and for studies, arts, and sciences, to which of my own nature I am most inclined.’

His point of view was so exalted that he saw the eddying, dashing stream of human events as a motionless silvery thread in the plain; so profound that his reflections shine like the far-off stars seen from the bottom of the deep sunken shaft; his circle so spacious, that it took in all the domains of science,—the errors of the past, the signs of the present, the hopes of the future. Like the archangel glancing from heaven to earth,—

‘Round he surveyed—and well might, where he stood
 So high above the circling canopy
 Of night’s extended shade—from eastern point
 Of Libra, to the fleecy star which bears
 Andromeda far off Atlantic seas
 Beyond the horizon.’

What he was as a writer, he was as an orator. Ben Jonson witnessed his eloquence:

‘There happened in my time one noble speaker who was full of gravity in his speaking. His language, where he could spare or pass by a jest, was nobly censorious. No man ever spoke more neatly, more pressly, more weightily, or suffered less emptiness, less idleness, in what he uttered. No member of his speech but consisted of his own graces. His hearers could not cough or look aside from him without loss. He commanded where he spoke, and had his judges angry and pleased at his devotion. No man had their affections more in his power. The fear of every man that heard him was lest he should make an end.’

Like Shakespeare and the rest, he grasped objects, not fractionally, but organized and complete. Like them, he speaks in the style of an oracle. He will not dispute, though he moves against a vast mass of prejudices. He condenses the details into a maxim, and hands us the result, with the words, ‘*Francis of Verulam thought thus.*’

He has the strong common sense which marks the English mind. He will not catch at clouds. He must stand on a fact,—a palpable and resisting fact. His motto is, experiment, again and again experiment. The end of knowledge is empire over matter. Plato and Seneca would extinguish cupidity; Bacon would secure property. They would teach us to endure pain; he would assuage it. They would form the mind to a high degree of wisdom and virtue; he would minister to the comforts of the body, without neglecting moral and religious instruction. He lacks the upright bias,—insight into transcendental truths.

He was a thinker living amid the turmoil of a fresh and stirring life, yet with the genius of counsel rather than of action. Scorning the least prudential care of his fortune, he was often in pecuniary distress. On one occasion he was arrested in the street for a debt, and lodged in a spunging-house. His heart, he declared, was not set on exterior things. His purpose was noble. ‘I am not hunting for fame. I have no desire to found a sect.’ ‘Enough for me,—the consciousness of well-deserving, and those real and effectual results with which fortune itself cannot interfere.’

But mortal greatness is not without mortal infirmity. He who

was to teach us how to philosophize, was himself fascinated by magical sympathies, surmised why witches eat human flesh; asserted: 'It is constantly received and avouched, that *the anointing of the weapon that maketh the wound* will heal the wound itself;' presented Prince Henry, as 'the first-fruits of his philosophy, a *sympathizing stone*, made of several mixtures, to know the heart of man,' whose 'operative gravity, magnetic and magical, would show, by the hand which held it, whether the heart was warm and affectionate.' He dictated the laws and economy of Nature, and was himself enamored of state and magnificence. He took a feminine delight in the brilliancy of his robes, loved to be gazed on in the streets, and to be wondered at in the cabinet. He championed the cause of intellectual freedom, and was himself a servile intriguer for place. A devoted worshipper of truth, he had the double temper of a lawyer and a politician,—duplicity. As *utility* was his watchword, he assiduously courted the favor of all who were likely to be of use to him; and might prop the fortunes of a friend,—till he was in danger of shaking his own. Loved, trusted, and befriended by Essex, he bore a principal part in sending that nobleman to the scaffold. In his judicial capacity, pledged to discharge his functions impartially, he accepted bribes from plaintiff and defendant. His illicit gains were stated at a hundred thousand pounds. After he had tried in vain to avert the sudden and terrible reverse, he wrote to the Peers: 'Upon advised consideration of the charges, descending into my own conscience, and calling my memory to account so far as I am able, I do plainly and ingenuously confess that I am guilty of corruption, and do renounce all defence.' 'My lords,' said he to the deputies who came to inquire whether the confession was really subscribed by himself, 'it is my act, my hand, my heart. I beseech your lordships to be merciful to a broken reed.'

He had none of the fire of sentiment or passion,—none of the kindling impulses which give intensity to character. To impulse he was serenely, coldly superior. Let us hope that his wife was equally unimpassioned,—a pure intelligence, craving no love, for it is doubtful if she received any. He desired to marry Lady Hatton, not for her disposition, which was that of an eccentric termagant, but for her money. Though indifferent or selfish in

personal relations, he had the mellow spirit of humanity, without which, he tells us, 'men are but a better kind of vermin.' His benevolence embraced all races and all ages. This philanthropy which distinguishes between individuals and mankind, and which we believe, after all, to have formed the essential feeling of his soul, is expressed in the description of one of the fathers of Solomon's House: '*His countenance was as the countenance of one who pities men.*'

As he preserved a calm neutrality, though living in an age of controversy, his creed, if he held any, may not be told. Theology is relegated to the province of faith. 'If I proceed to treat of it,' he said, 'I shall step out of the bark into the ship of the Church. Neither will the stars of philosophy, which have hitherto so nobly shone on us, any longer give us their light.' But speculation is profitless, and scepticism is powerless, before these vital, grand, imperial words:

'I had rather believe all the fables in the legend, and the Talmud, and the Alcoran, than that this universal frame is without a mind.'

He cultivated letters to the last moment of his life. We could fancy him awaiting the signal for his departure, without boldness and without fear, with that sublime reliance on the future which makes the hour of evening tranquil. He contemplated the end with the composure that becomes the scholar:

'I have often thought upon death, and I find it the least of all evils. All that which is past is as a dream; and he that hopes or depends upon time coming, dreams waking. So much of our life as we have discovered is already dead; and all those hours which we share, even from the breasts of our mothers, until we return to our grandmother the earth, are part of our dying days, whereof even this is one, and those that succeed are of the same nature, for we die daily; and, as others have given place to us, so we must, in the end, give way to others.'

Then, as if sensibly passing to the last rest:

'Mine eyes begin to discharge their watch, and compound with this fleshly weakness for a time of perpetual rest; and I shall presently be as happy for a few hours, as I had died the first hour I was born.'

Not without emotion do we read:

'First, I bequeath my soul and body into the hands of God by the blessed oblation of my Saviour; the one at the time of my dissolution, the other at the time of my resurrection. For my burial, I desire it may be in St. Michael's Church, near St. Albans: there was my mother buried. . . . For my name and memory, I leave it to men's charitable speeches, and to foreign nations, and the next ages.'

Influence.—He confirmed and accelerated the new movement by a thorough and large apprehension of its bent and value.

At home, his authority, within forty years, was the subject of complaint. Abroad, treatises were written on his method, and academies were formed which expressly recognised him as their master. In France it was said: 'However numerous and important be the discoveries reserved for posterity, it will always be just to say of *him*, that he laid the foundation of their success, so that the glory of this great man, so far from diminishing with the progress of time, is destined to receive perpetual increase.'

He had taken all knowledge for his province, and all realms were to be affected:

'One may doubt, not to say object, whether it is natural philosophy alone that we speak of perfecting by our method, or other sciences as well—logic, ethics, politics. But we certainly intend what has been said as applicable to *all*; and as the common logic which governs by syllogisms pertains not only to natural but to all sciences, so also our own, which proceeds by induction, embraces all.'

Hence his influence, though indirect, due to the practical or *positive* spirit of his method, has perhaps been more powerful on mental and moral than on physical science; for the dominant principle of modern psychology is, that experience, exterior and interior, is the only origin of knowledge. 'The philosophy of Locke,' says Degerando, 'ought to have been called the philosophy of Bacon.' Not without justice, may he be looked upon as the inspiration of that empirical school which numbers among its adherents such names as Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Hartley, Mill, Condillac, and others of less note.

We have elsewhere indicated some of the 'fruits' of the new philosophy. We have also explained that in illuminating the physical field, it has darkened the intellectual and moral. It has furnished a lamp to guide our feet through the outer world, but none to light our way to the inward. It has fastened upon ethics an earthly utilitarian temper, taking no account of the motives that drop from the skies.

We have remarked, too, those profound reflections which, besides forming a treasure of ethical and political wisdom, have stimulated the thought and suggested the inquiries of after times. If to-day a scientist wishes to express compactly his scorn of dogmatism, of custom, it is to the *Organum* that he goes for an aphorism. Volumes have been written in the expansion of its statements. The ideas of the *Essays* have become

domesticated, and have been continually reproduced, to enrich and enlarge the individual and collective mind.

Finally, mournfully, my lord, you whose glorious day-dream is hourly accomplishing around us, whose inductive spell has proved more puissant than the incantations of Merlin,—you have left to all the children of men, from your own checkered life of magnificence and of shame, this retributive, warning induction, albeit not contemplated in your scheme: *When man departs from the divine means of reaching the divine end, he suffers harm and loss.*

MILTON.

Three poets in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn;
The first in loftiness of thought surpassed;
The next in majesty, in both the last:
The force of nature could no further go,—
To make a third, she joined the other two.—*Dryden.*

Biography.—Born in London, in 1608, son of a Puritan scrivener; inherited from his father literary tastes and a love of music, from his mother a gentle nature and weak eyes; was instructed first by private tuition, sent to school at twelve, and at sixteen entered Cambridge; took the usual degrees, and returned home, to spend five soft flowing years among the woods of Horton; read the classics and wrote; travelled on the Continent; formed the acquaintance of Grotius at Paris, and of Galileo at Florence; fed his imagination on Italian scenery, art, and letters; received some distinction, and was excluded from others by his liberal utterances on religion; was about to start for Sicily and Greece, but, hearing of the pending rupture between the king and parliament, hastened back to England, too conscientious to pass his life in foreign amusements while his countrymen were contending for their rights; while waiting for a call to service, conducted a private school; taught many years and at various times; threw himself into the raging sea of controversy, against the Royalists and the Established Church; at thirty-five, within a month after meeting her, married Mary Powel, who, four weeks

afterwards, repelled by spare diet and austere manners, returned to her parents; wrote to her, but got no answer; sent, and his messenger was ill-treated; determined to repudiate her for disobedience, published essays on *Divorce*, held himself absolved from the bond; paid court to another lady of great accomplishments, but suddenly, seeing his wife on her knees imploring forgiveness, received her back, and lived with her until her death; in later life married twice, the last time to a woman thirty years his junior; meanwhile, had become Latin secretary to Cromwell; carried on the wordy strife with puritanical savageness, and lost his sight willingly in the war of pamphlets; survived the funeral of the Republic and the proscription of his doctrines, his books burned by the hangman, himself constrained to hide, at length imprisoned, then released; living in expectancy of assassination, losing three-fourths of his fortune by confiscations, bankruptcy, and the great fire; neither loved nor respected by his daughters, who had bitterly complained of his exactions, and the second of whom on being told that he was to be married, had said that his marriage would be no news—the best would be his death; seeking solace, yet a little, in meditation and in poverty; and, after so many miseries, expiring in 1674, calm as the setting sun, tried at once by pain, danger, poverty, obloquy, and blindness,—prepared by culture for a book of universal knowledge, and, by suffering, for a Christian epic.

Writings.—During a long, sultry midday of twenty years—1640 to 1660—Milton gave himself to the championship of ideas—ideas that were to emancipate the press—ideas that plucked at thrones—ideas that were to raise up commonwealths. At the outset, as one created for strife, he wrote against Episcopacy with incomparable eloquence and concentrated rancor:

‘All mouths began to be opened against the bishops. . . . I saw that a way was opening for the establishment of real liberty; that the foundation was laying for the deliverance of man from the yoke of slavery and superstition; . . . and as I had from my youth studied the distinction between religious and civil rights, . . . I determined to relinquish the other pursuits in which I was engaged, and to transfer the whole force of my talents and my industry to this one important object.’¹

Then, in conjunction with others, hurled himself upon the prince with inexpiable hatred; and, when bishops and king had been made to suffer for their long despotism, justified the regicide:

¹*Second Defence.*

‘For what king’s majesty sitting upon an exalted throne, ever shone so brightly, as that of the people of England then did, when, shaking off that old superstition, which had prevailed a long time, they gave judgment upon the king himself, or rather upon an enemy who had been their king, caught as it were in a net by his own laws (who alone of all mortals challenged to himself impunity by a divine right), and scrupled not to inflict the same punishment upon him, being guilty, which he would have inflicted upon any other?’¹

With like energy, armed with logic and spurred by conviction, he attacked all prevailing systems of education:

‘Language is but the instrument conveying to us things useful to be known. And though a linguist should pride himself to have all the tongues that Babel cleft the world into, yet, if he have not studied the solid things in them, as well as the words and lexicons, he were nothing so much to be esteemed a learned man as any yeoman or tradesman competently wise in his mother dialect only. Hence appear the many mistakes which have made learning generally so unpleasing and so unsuccessful: first, we do amiss to spend seven or eight years merely in scraping together so much miserable Latin and Greek as might be learned otherwise easily and delightfully in one year.’²

The pupil shall not begin with results, but reach them by experience. He is not expected to construct a telescope—no more shall he be required to construct a poem or essay without resources either of reflection or of knowledge. The seed must be sown, and the soil fertilized, before the flower and the fruit can be gathered:

‘And that which casts our proficiency therein so much behind, is our time lost partly in a preposterous exaction, forcing the empty wits of children to compose themes, verses, and orations, which are the acts of ripest judgment, and the final work of a head filled, by long reading and observing, with elegant maxims and copious invention. These are not matters to be wrung from poor striplings, like blood out of the nose, or the plucking of untimely fruit.’³

Having demonstrated what we should not do,—

‘I shall detain you now no longer, . . . but straight conduct you to a hillside, where I will point you out the right path of a virtuous and noble education; laborious, indeed, at the first ascent, but else so smooth, so green, so full of goodly prospect and melodious sounds on every side, that the harp of Orpheus was not more charming.’⁴

Above the roar of revolution, his voice was heard thundering against the tyranny of tradition and custom. In sentences that are like the blasts of a trumpet calling men to freedom, he protested against the oppression of printers and the restriction of printing; and as one who foresees the future and reveals the truth, exulted in that era of deliverance when every man should be encouraged to think, however divergently, and to bring his thoughts to the light:

¹ *Defence.*

² *Tractate of Education.* We commend these views to those refiners of method in education who, pavilioned in the glittering pride of our superficial accomplishments, seem to arrogate all excellence to the present, and to fancy that all anterior is but a dull and useless blank.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

'Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks: methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam; purging and unscaling her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of the heavenly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms.'¹

He never wearies of railing at the pedantic theologians, who answer an argument by a citation from the Fathers; nor of mocking and jeering at the corpulent prelates, persecutors of free discussion, whose gaudy Church is a political machine to uphold the Crown:

'What greater debasement can there be to royal dignity, whose towering and steadfast height rests upon the unmovable foundations of justice, and heroic virtue, than to chain it in a dependence of subsisting, or ruining, to the painted battlements and gaudy rottenness, of prelacy, which want but one puff of the king's to blow them down like a pasteboard house built of court cards?'²

It is the power of superabundant force which courses in athletic limbs. Irony is too refined and feeble. Invectives are blows that ease ferocity, and knock an adversary down:

'The table of communion, now become a table of separation, stands like an exalted platform upon the brow of the quire, fortified with bulwark and barricado, to keep off the profane touch of the laics, whilst the obscene and surfeited priest scruples not to paw and mamnock the sacramental bread as familiarly as his tavern biscuit.'³

Then with a vengeful fury that would have delighted Calvin:

'They shall be thrown eternally into the darkest and deepest gulf of hell, where, under the despiteful control, the trample, and spurn of all the other damned, that in the anguish of their torture shall have no other ease than to exercise a raving and bestial tyranny over them as their slaves and negroes, they shall remain in that plight forever the basest, the lowermost, the most dejected, most underfoot, and down-trodden vassals of perdition.'⁴

Enthusiasm may break out in a moment into a resplendent hymn. His reasoning always ends with a poem—a song of triumph whose richness and exaltation, as in the following, carry the splendor of the Renaissance into the earnestness of the Reformation:

'O Thou the ever-begotten Light and perfect Image of the Father, . . . Who is there that cannot trace thee now in thy beamy walk through the midst of thy sanctuary, amidst those golden candlesticks, which have long suffered a dimness amongst us through the violence of those that had seized them, and were more taken with the mention of their gold than of their starry light? . . . Come therefore, O thou that hast the seven stars in thy right hand, appoint thy chosen priests according to their orders and courses of old, to minister before thee, and duly to press and pour out the consecrated oil into thy holy and ever-burning lamps. Thou hast sent out the spirit of prayer upon thy servants over all the land to this effect, and stirred up their vows as the sound of many waters about thy throne. . . . O perfect and accomplish thy glorious acts! . . .

¹ *Areopagitica.*

² *Of Reformation in England.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

Come forth out of thy royal chambers, O Prince of all the kings of the earth! put on the visible robes of thy imperial majesty, take up that unlimited sceptre which thy Almighty Father hath bequeathed thee; for now the voice of thy bride calls thee, and all creatures sigh to be renewed.¹

Do not take these for the whole, which is ponderous and dull, heavy with scholasticism, and marred by the grossness of the times. They are but fine isolated morsels which show the all-powerful passion, the majestic imagination of the man, whose dominant need and faculty lead him to noble conceptions, and have preordained him a poet. In childhood he had written verses; and at Cambridge his poetic genius opened in the *Hymn on the Nativity*, any stanza of which was sufficient to show that a new and great light was rising:

‘It was the winter wild,
While the heaven-born child
All meanly wrapped in the rude manger lies;
Nature, in awe, to him
Had doffed her gaudy trim,
With her great Master so to sympathise:
It was no season then for her
To wanton with the sun, her lusty paramour.’

Also:

‘No war, or battle’s sound,
Was heard the world around:
The idle spear and shield were high up hung;
The hooked chariot stood
Unstained with hostile blood;
The trumpet spake not to the armed throng:
And kings sat still with awful eye,
As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by.’

Or again:

‘But peaceful was the night
Wherein the Prince of Light
His reign of peace upon the earth began:
The winds, with wonder whist,
Smoothly the waters kissed,
Whispering new joys to the mild ocean,
Who now hath quite forgot to rave,
While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmed wave.’

At Horton, ere yet his eye was dimmed, while the soul was fresh, and responsive to the sweet scenes of rural life, he wrote the happiest and richest of his productions. The heart of the scholar, transported from the pale cloister to the flowery mead, is open to the careless beauty and laughing plenty around him;

¹*Animadversions on the Remonstrants’ Defence.*

and the sensuous imagination bodies forth its serene content in a succession of images unsurpassed for their charm:

<p>‘Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee, Jest and youthful Jollity, Quips and Cranks, and wanton Wiles, Nods and Becks and <i>wreathed Smiles</i>, <i>Such as hang on Hebe’s cheek,</i> <i>And love to live in dimple sleek;</i> Sport that wrinkled Care derides. <i>And Laughter holding both his sides.</i> <i>Come and trip it, as you go,</i> <i>On the light fantastic toe;</i> And in thy right hand lead with thee The mountain-nymph, sweet Liberty; And, if I give thee honor due, Mirth, admit me of thy crew, To live with her, and live with thee, In unproved pleasures free; To hear the lark begin his flight,</p>	<p>And singing, <i>startle</i> the dull night, <i>From his watch-tower in the skies,</i> Till the dappled dawn doth rise; Then to come <i>in spite of sorrow,</i> <i>And at my window bid good-morrow,</i> Through the sweet-briar, or the vine, Or the twisted eglantine; While the cock with lively din, Scatters the rear of darkness thin, And to the stack or the barn-door <i>Stoutly struts his dames before:</i> . . . While the ploughman near at hand, <i>Whistles o’er the furrowed land,</i> <i>And the milkmaid singeth blithe,</i> <i>And the mower whets his scythe.</i> And every shepherd tells his tale, Under the hawthorn in the dale.’¹</p>
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This is the mirthful aspect of Nature, with the fadeless scent of the hawthorn hedge. But the pensive is nobler. Milton prefers it, and summons Melancholy:

‘Come, pensive nun, devout and pure,
Sober, stedfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestic train,
And sable stole of Cypress lawn
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
Come, but keep thy wonted state,
With even step and musing gait
And looks commercing with the skies,
*Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes.’*²

With her he wanders among the primeval trees,—

‘*Where the rude axe, with heaved stroke,*
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.’

Or in the retirement of study,—

‘*Where glowing embers through the room*
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom;
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth.’

Or under the ‘high embowered roof,’ amid antique pillars,—

‘*And storied windows richly dight,*
Casting a dim religious light.’

While the growth of Puritan sentiment was chilling the taste for such entertainment, Milton, conceiving sublimity, on an altar

¹ *L’Allegro.*

² *Il Penseroso.*

of flowers, composed the *Comus*; a masque—a lyric poem in the form of a play, an amusement for the palace; with others, an exhibition of costumes and fairy tales; with him, a divine eulogy of innocence and purity. A noble lady, separated from her two brothers, strays—

‘Through the perplexed paths of this drear wood,
The nodding horror of whose shady brows
Threats the forlorn and wandering passenger.’

There *Comus*, son of an enchantress, amid the clamors of men transformed into beasts, holds his wild revels:

‘Now the top of heaven doth hold;
And the gilded car of day
His glowing axle doth allay
In the steep Atlantic stream;
And the slope Sun his upward beam
Shoots against the dusky pole;
Pacing toward the other goal
Of his chamber in the East.
Meanwhile, welcome joy, and feast,
Midnight shout, and revelry,
Topsy dance, and jollity,
Braid your locks with rosy twine,
Dropping odours, dropping wine. . . .
Come, knit hands, and beat the ground,
In a light fantastic round.’

She is troubled by the turbulent joy which she hears afar in the darkness. A thousand fantasies startle her, but her strength is in the heavenly guardians who watch over the good:

‘O welcome, pure-eyed Faith, white-handed Hope,
Thou hov’ring angel girt with golden wings,
And thou, unblemish’d form of Chastity!
I see ye visibly, and now believe
That He, the Supreme Good, to whom all things ill
Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
Would send a glist’ring guardian, if need were,
To keep my life and honour unassail’d.’

She calls her brothers, in strains that steal upon the air like rich distilled perfumes, and reach the dissolute god, who approaches, changed by a magic dust into a gentle shepherd:

‘Can any mortal mixture of earth’s mould
Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?
Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
And with these raptures moves the vocal air
To testify his hidden residence.
How sweetly did they float upon the wings
Of silence through the empty-vaulted night,
At every fall smoothing the raven down
Of Darkness till it smiled! I have oft heard

My mother Circe with the Syrens three,
 Amidst the flowery-kirtled Naiades,
 Culling their potent herbs, and baleful drugs;
 Who, as they sung, would take the prison'd soul
 And lap it in Elysium; Scylla wept,
 And chid her barking waves into attention,
 And fell Charybdis murmur'd soft applause:
 Yet they in pleasing slumber lull'd the sense,
 And in sweet madness robb'd it of itself;
 But such a sacred, and home-felt delight,
 Such sober certainty of waking bliss
 I never heard till now. I'll speak to her,
 And she shall be my queen.'

Under pretence of leading her out of the forest, he beguiles her to his palace, and seats her, with 'nerves all chained up,' before a sumptuous table. She scorns his offer, and confounds the tempter by the energy of her indignation. Suddenly her brothers enter, led by the attendant Spirit; cast themselves upon him with drawn swords, and he flees. To deliver their enchanted sister, they invoke a river nymph, who sits—

'Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,
 In twisted braids of lilies knitting
 The loose train of her amber-dropping hair.'

Sprinkled by the naiad, the lady leaves the 'venomed seat,' which held her spell-bound. Joy reigns. What stronger breast-plate than a heart untainted? Therefore,—

'Love Virtue; she alone is free.
 She can teach ye how to climb
 Higher than the sphery chime;
 Or, if Virtue feeble were,
 Heaven itself would stoop to her.'

To the protracted storm succeeded a sombre, reactionary evening; and when the blind old warrior turned again to the dreams of his youth, lightness and grace were gone. Theology, disappointment, and conflict had subdued the lyric flight, and fitted him for a metaphysical theme—exploits of the Deity, battles of the supernatural, the history of salvation. It had been among his early hopes to construct something which the world would not willingly let die. Before entering upon his travels, he had written to a friend: 'I am meditating, by the help of heaven, an immortality of fame, but my Pegasus has not yet feathers enough to soar aloft in the fields of air'; and after his return, he said to another: 'Some day I shall address a work to posterity which will perpetuate my name, at least in the land in which I

was born.' In old age, his choice had settled upon *Paradise Lost*, whose composition occupied from 1658 to 1665, though the vast design had long been shaping itself. It opens with an invocation to the Muse to sing—

'Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat.'

And a petition to the Spirit for inspiration:

'What in me is dark,
Illumine; what is low, raise and support;
That to the height of this great argument
I may assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.'

Out of 'solid and liquid fire' is framed a world of horror and suffering, vast and vague:

'A dungeon horrible on all sides round,
As one great furnace flamed; yet from those flames
No light, but rather darkness visible
Served only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades.'

There wallows the colossal Satan, with the rebel angels, hurled from the ethereal heights into that livid lake:

'With head uplift above the wave, and eyes
That sparkling blazed, his other parts besides
Prone on the flood, extended long and large,
Lay floating many a rood.'

But 'by permission of all-ruling Heaven,'—

'Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool
His mighty stature; on each hand the flames,
Driv'n backward, slope their pointing spires, and, roll'd
In billows, leave i' th' midst a horrid vale.'

Fiercer than the flames is the defiant spirit they enwrap—the proud but ruined seraph, who, preferring independence to servility, welcomes defeat and torment as a glory and a joy:

'Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,
Said then the lost Arch-Angel, this the seat
That we must change for heav'n, this mournful gloom
For that celestial light? Be it so, since he
Who now is Sovran can dispose and bid
What shall be right: farthest from him is best,
Whom reason hath equall'd, force hath made supreme
Above his equals. Farewell happy fields,
Where joy forever dwells! Hail horrors, hail
Infernal world! and thou profoundest Hell

Receive thy new possessor; one who brings
 A mind not to be changed by place or time.
 The mind is its own place, and in itself
 Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n.
 What matter where, if I be still the same,
 And what I should be, all but less than He
 Whom thund'ring hath made greater? Here at least
 We shall be free; th' Almighty hath not built
 Here for His envy, will not drive us hence:
 Here we may reign secure, and in my choice
 To reign is worth ambition, though in hell;
 Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven.'

He gathers his crew, who lay entranced thick as autumnal leaves,
 and addresses them:

'He, above the rest
 In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
 Stood like a tower. . . His face
 Deep scars of thund'ring had intrench'd, and care
 Sat on his faded cheek; but under brows
 Of dauntless courage, and considerate pride
 Waiting revenge. . . Attention held them mute.
 Thrice he essay'd, and thrice, in spite of scorn,
 Tears, such as angels weep, burst forth.'

At last his words find utterance, and he comforts them with the
 hope of universal empire. A council of peers is held in Pandemonium,—

'A thousand demi-gods on golden seats';

And their dauntless king,—

'High on a throne of royal state, which far
 Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,
 Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
 Show'rs on her kings barbaric pearl and gold.'

It is resolved to go in search of a new kingdom and a new creature, of which there had been an ancient prophecy or report, and to inflict upon them infinite misery in compensation for the loss of infinite bliss. But,—

'Whom shall we find
 Sufficient? who shall tempt with wand'ring feet
 The dark unbottom'd infinite abyss,
 And through the palpable obscure find out
 His unconth way, or spread his airy flight,
 Upborne with indefatigable wings
 Over the vast abrupt, ere he arrive
 The happy isle?'

Each reads in the other's countenance his own dismay. The awful suspense is only broken by their matchless chief, who

offers himself for the general safety, and undertakes the voyage alone, though —

‘Long is the way
And hard that out of Hell leads up to light;
Our prison strong; this huge convex of fire,
Outrageous to devour, immures us round
Ninefold, and gates of burning adamant
Barr’d over us prohibit all egress,’

Then the plunge ‘into the void profound of unessential Night.’ Arrived at Hell-bounds, mark the horror and grandeur of the situation:

‘Thrice threefold the gates; three folds were brass,
Three iron, three of adamantine rock,
Impenetrable, impaled with circling fire,
Yet unconsumed. Before the gates there sat
On either side a formidable shape;
The one seemed woman to the waist, and fair,
But ended foul in many a scaly fold,
Voluminous and vast, a serpent arm’d
With mortal sting: about her middle round
A cry of Hell-hounds never ceasing, bark’d
With wide Cerberean mouths full loud, and rung
A hideous peal: yet, when they list, would creep,
If aught disturb’d their noise, into her womb,
And kennel there, yet there still bark’d and howl’d
Within unseen. . . . The other shape,
If shape it might be call’d that shape had none
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb,
Or substance might be call’d that shadow seemed,
For each seem’d either; black it stood as Night,
Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell,
And shook a dreadful dart. What seem’d his head
The likeness of a kingly crown had on.
Satan was now at hand, and from his seat,
The monster moving onward, came as fast
With horrid strides, Hell trembled as he strode,
Th’ undaunted Fiend what this might be admired —
Admired, not feared.’

Satan, unterrified, and burning like a comet, advances. But the snaky sorceress, rushing between the combatants, takes from her side the fatal key, and unlocks the gates, whose ‘furnace-mouth’ would admit ‘a bannered host with extended wings.’ On the frontiers of Chaos, the flying Fiend weighs his spread wings, and descries —

‘This pendent world, in bigness as a star
Of smallest magnitude close by the moon.’

In prospect of Eden, he falls into painful doubts:

‘Me miserable! which way shall I fly
Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?
Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell,

And in the lowest deep a lower deep
 Still threat'ning to devour me opens wide,
 To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heav'n.

There is no repentance, no pardon, but by submission; and that, disdain forbids:

'So farewell hope, and with hope farewell fear,
 Farewell remorse: all good to me is lost:
 Evil be thou my good; by thee at least
 Divided empire with Heav'n's King I hold.'

He reaches the wall, overleaps it, sees Adam and Eve, hears them converse as they repose on the velvet green, amid sporting kids and ramping lions under trees of ambrosial fruitage:

'Sight hateful! sight tormenting! thus these two,
 Imparadised in one another's arms,
 The happier Eden, shall enjoy their fill
 Of bliss on bliss; while I to Hell am thrust,
 Where neither joy nor love, but fierce desire,
 Among our other torments not the least,
 Still unfulfill'd with pain of longing, pines.
 Yet let me not forget what I have gained
 From their own mouths; all is not theirs, it seems;
 One fatal tree there stands, of Knowledge call'd,
 Forbidden them to taste: Knowledge forbidden?'

He is arrested, by a night-watch, while tempting Eve in a dream, and brought into the presence of Gabriel, but escapes; returns, however, in a rising mist at midnight:

'Cautious of day,
 Since Uriel, regent of the sun, descri'd
 His entrance, and forewarn'd the Cherubim
 That kept their watch.'

Entering into the form of a serpent, he spies Eve apart, veiled in a cloud of fragrance:

'So thick the roses blushing round
 About her glow'd, oft stooping to support
 Each flow'r of slender stalk, whose head, though gay
 Carnation, purple, azure, or speck'd with gold,
 Hung drooping unsustained.'

He knows she is a woman, and therefore must first use all his arts to lure the eye, approaching,—

'Not with indented wave,
 Prone on the ground, as since, but on his rear,
 Circular base of rising folds, that tower'd
 Fold above fold a surging maze, his head
 Crested aloft, and carbuncle his eyes;
 With burnish'd neck of verdant gold, erect
 Amidst his circling spires, that on the grass
 Floated redundant.'

She hears the sound of rustling leaves, but heeds not, because she is used to it. Bolder now, he presents himself:

‘But as in gaze admiring, oft he bow’d
His turret crest and sleek enamel’d neck,
Fawning, and lick’d the ground whereon she trod,
His gentle dumb expression turn’d at length
The eye of Eve to mark his play.’

Having her attention, the next point is to excite the ruling passion—curiosity, which he does by the most delicate of compliments. Amazed to hear a brute articulate, she wants to know what it can mean, and he explains:

‘Empress of this fair world, resplendent Eve,
Easy to me it is to tell thee all
What thou command’st; and right thou should’st be obey’d.
I was at first as other beasts that graze
The trodden herb, of abject thoughts and low,
As was my food: nor aught but food discern’d,
Or sex, and apprehended nothing high;
Till on a day roving the field, I chanced
A goodly tree far distant to behold,
Loaden with fruit of fairest colours mix’d,
Ruddy and gold. . . . To pluck and eat my fill
I spared not; for such pleasure till that hour
At feed or fountain never had I found.’

With many wiles and arguments he overcomes her scruples, and induces her to eat. She says:

‘In the day we eat
Of this fair fruit, our doom is, we shall die.
How dies the serpent? he hath eaten and lives,
And knows, and speaks, and reasons, and discerns,
Irrational till then.’

True and conclusive:

‘So saying, her rash hand, in evil hour,
Forth reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she eat!
Earth felt the wound; and Nature from her seat
Sighing, through all her works gave signs of woe,
That all was lost.’

Satan, triumphant, arrives at Pandemonium, and exultingly relates his success. He awaits their shout of applause, but hears instead, on all sides, only a dismal hiss:

‘He wondered, but not long
Had leisure, wond’ring at himself now more:
His visage drawn he felt to sharp and spare,
His arms clung to his ribs, his legs intertwining
Each other, till supplanted down he fell
A monstrous serpent on his belly prone,
Reluctant, but in vain; a greater Pow’r

Now ruled him, punish'd in the shape he sinn'd
According to his doom. He would have spoke,
But hiss for hiss return'd with forked tongue
To forked tongue.'

Solaced by the promise of redemption, the fallen pair are led forth from Paradise, casting back one fond lingering look upon their happy seat,—

'Waved over by that flaming brand, the gate
With dreadful faces thron'd and fiery arms.
Some natural tears they dropt, but wiped them soon.'

Style.—The difficulties of his prose—the heaviness of its logic, the clumsiness of its discussions, the involution of its sentences—have almost sealed it to common readers; but if it lacks simplicity and perspicuity, it has what is nobler—breadth of eloquence, wealth of imagery, sublimity of diction.

His poetical manner, with more of richness and inversion, is essentially the same—ample, measured, and organ-like; not impulsive and abrupt, but solid and regular, as of one who writes from a superb self-command. All languages, ancient and modern, contributed something of splendor, of energy, of music; but no exotic is so largely and conspicuously helpful as the stately Latin, as none is so valuable for the purposes of harmony. Many of his grandest lines consist chiefly of this element, as,—

'The palpable obscure.'

*'Ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,
Confusion worse confounded.'*

*'Deep on his front engraven
Deliberation sat, and public care.'*

'Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds.'

'Thrones, dominations, principedoms, virtues, powers.'

His fondness for Latinisms is perceptible in every such arrangement as—

*'Him the Almighty power
Hurled headlong, flaming down the ethereal heights,'*

and in that strictly periodic structure, of which finer examples can nowhere be found than those already given. A few of his epithets, taken at random, will suggest his ruling characteristics,—'hideous ruin and combustion'; 'wasteful deep'; 'gentle gales, fanning their odoriferous wings'; 'gay-enamelled colors'; 'ponderous shield, ethereal temper, massy, large, and round.'

His rhythm beats with no intermittent pulse. He is unerr-

ingly harmonious. To specify but two or three of the modes by which from the iambic blank he obtains the most felicitous effects:

1. *By the interchange of feet,—*

Trochee.....‘*High on a throne of royal state.*’

Anapæst.....‘*Created hugest that swim the ocean stream.*’

Spondee.....‘*The force of those dire arms.*’

2. *By a perpetual change of the cæsural pause,—*

‘At once, as far as angel’s ken he views
The dismal situation, waste and wild;
A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,
As one great furnace flamed, yet from those flames
No light, but rather darkness visible,
Served only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
That comes to all, but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge fed
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.’

3. *By an unequalled skill in the management of sound.*
How expressive of harshness,—

‘On a sudden open fly,
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,
The infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
Harsh thunder.’

How expressive of peace,—

‘Heaven opened wide
Her ever-during gates, harmonious sound,
On golden hinges turning.’

Or of the uproar of contending hosts,—

‘Arms on armor clashing bray’d
Horrible discord, and the madding wheels
Of brazen chariots raged.’

Or of the virgin charms of Eden,—

‘Airs, vernal airs,
Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune
The trembling leaves, while universal Pan,
Knit with the graces and the hours in dance,
Led on the eternal spring.’

His natural movement is majestic, as of a full deep stream; but not, as we have seen, without its phases. In his masterpieces, we may see, in the order of their execution, what might be expected *a priori*,—the intellectual gaining upon the sensual qualities of art: the youthful freshness of *Comus*, passages of

which might have been written by Fletcher or Shakespeare; the grave full-toned harmonies of *Paradise Lost*; the rugged eccentricities and harsh inversions of *Paradise Regained*; and the cold, uncompromising severity of *Samson Agonistes*.

Rank.—As a poet, he was little regarded by his contemporaries. ‘The old blind poet,’ says Waller, ‘hath published a tedious poem on the Fall of Man. If its length be not considered as a merit, it hath no other.’ To be neglected by them was the penalty paid for surpassing them. The fame of a great man needs time to give it due perspective. He was esteemed and feared, however, as a learned and powerful disputant. His prose writings, in his own day, seem to have been read with avidity; but the interests which inspired them were accidental, while in argument they have the rambling course of indignation, and their cloth of gold is disfigured with the mud of invective.

The poet of revealed religion under its Puritanic type. *Paradise Lost* is the epic of a fallen cause, the embodiment of Puritan England—its grand ambitions, its colossal energies, its strenuous struggles, its broken hope, its proud and sombre horizon. It has the distinguishing merit and signal defect of the Puritan temper,—the equable realization of a great purpose, and the painful want of a large, genial humanity.

The last of the Elizabethans; holding his place on the borders of the Renaissance, which was setting, and of the Doctrinal Age, which was rising; between the epoch of natural belief, of unbiassed fancy, and the epoch of severe religion, of narrow opinions; displaying, under limitations, the old creativeness in new subjects; concentrating the literary past and future; and when his proper era had passed by, looming in solitary greatness at a moment when imagination was extinct and taste was depraved.

By the purity of his sentiments and the sustained fulness of his style, he holds affinity with Spenser, who calmly dreams; by his theme and majesty, with Dante, who is fervid and rapt; by his profundity and learning, with Bacon, who is more comprehensive; by his inspiration, with Shakespeare, who is freer and more varied: but in sublimity he excels them all, even Homer. The first two books of *Paradise Lost* are continued instances of the sublime.

Its *height* is what distinguishes the entire poem from every

other. Its central figure, the ruined arch-angel, is the most tremendous conception in the compass of poetry; no longer the petty mischief-maker, the horned enchanter, of the middle-age, but a giant and a hero, whose eyes are like eclipsed suns, whose cheeks are thunder-scarred, whose wings are as two black forests; armed with a shield whose circumference is the orb of the moon, with a spear in comparison with which the tallest pine were but a wand; doubly armed by pride, fury, and despair; brave and faithful to his troops, touched with pity for his innocent victims, pleading necessity for his design, actuated less by pure malice than by ambition and resentment.

Burns resolved to buy a pocket-copy of Milton, and study that noble (?) character, Satan; not that his interest fastened upon the evil, but upon the miraculous manifestation of energy,—the vehement will, the spiritual might, which could overpower racking pains, and, in the midst of desolation, cry:

‘Hail, horrors! hail
Infernal world! and thou, profoundest hell,
Receive thy new possessor!’

But stoical self-repression limits the imagination. If he was the loftiest of great poets, none ever had less of that dramatic sensibility which creates and differentiates souls, endowing each with its appropriate act and word. He can neither forget nor conceal himself. The most affecting passages in his great epic are personal allusions, as when he reverts to the scenes which exist no longer to him:

‘Thus with the year
Seasons return, but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of ev’n or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer’s rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
But cloud instead, and ever-during dark
Surrounds me.’

His individuality is always present. Adam and Eve are often difficult to be separated. They pay each other philosophical compliments, and converse in dissertations. She is too serious. If you are mortal, you will sooner love the laughing Rosalind, with her bird-like petulance and volubility:

‘O coz, coz, coz, my pretty little coz, that thou didst know how many fathoms deep I am in love.’¹

‘Why, how now, Orlando, where have you been all this while? You a lover?’²

¹As *You Like It*. ²*Ibid.*

Or to one who has seen her lover in this autumn glade:

‘What said he? how looked he? Wherein went he? Did he ask for me? Where remains he? How parted he with thee? and when shalt thou see him again? . . . Do you not know that I am a woman? When I think, I must speak. Sweet, say on.’¹

Eve is Milton’s ideal. With her he would have been happy. There would have been no friction. He would administer the scientific draughts required, and she would reply becomingly, gratefully, as he wished:

‘My . . . Disposer, what thou bidst,
Unargued, I obey; so God ordains;
God is thy law, thou mine; to know no more
Is woman’s happiest knowledge and her praise.
With thee conversing I forget all time;
All seasons and their change, all please alike.’

As for Adam, no mortal woman could love him, however she might admire him,—least of all Mary Powel.

Milton could not divorce himself from dialectics. His Jehovah is too much of an advocate. He expounds and enforces theology like an Oxford divine. The highest art is only indirectly didactic. The most exquisite can produce no illusion when it is employed to represent the transcendent and absolute. Spiritual agents cannot be poetically expressed with metaphysical accuracy. They must be clothed in material forms,—must have a sphere and mode of agency not wholly superhuman.²

Character.—He was born for great ideas and great service. At ten he had a learned tutor, and at twelve he worked until midnight. It is *Milton’s* childhood that is described in *Paradise Regained*, where Christ is made to say:

‘While I was yet a child, no childish play
To me was pleasing; all my mind was set
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do,
What might be public good; myself I thought
Born to that end, born to promote all truth,
All righteous things.’

No man ever conceived a loftier ideal, or a firmer resolve to unfold it. Amid the licentious gallantries of the South he perfected himself by study, without soiling himself by contagion:

¹ *As You Like It*.

² M. Taine demands of the poet what is altogether impossible,—that God and Messiah should act and feel in conformity with their essential natures. To reconcile the spiritual properties of supernatural beings with the human modes of existence which it is necessary to ascribe to them, is a difficulty too great for the human mind to overcome. The infinite cannot be made to enter finite limits without jar and collision. It may be justly insisted, of course, that the Deity shall not be bound to a precise formula.

'I call the Deity to witness that in all those places in which vice meets with so little discouragement, and is practised with so little shame, I never once deviated from the paths of integrity and virtue, and perpetually reflected that, though my conduct might escape the notice of men, it could not elude the inspection of God.'

The idea of a purer existence than any he saw around him, regulated all his toil:

'He who would aspire to write well in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem; . . . not presuming to sing high praises of heroic men or famous cities unless he have in himself the experience and the practice of all that which is praiseworthy.'

Not art, but life, was the end of his effort,—to identify himself and others with all select and holy images. *Comus* is but a hymn to chastity. Two noble passages attest the conviction which fired him, the purpose which no temptation could shake, and which gives such authority to his strain:

'Virtue could see to do what Virtue would
By her own radiant light, though sun and moon
Were in the flat sea sunk.'

And:

'This I hold firm;—
Virtue may be assail'd, but never hurt,—
Surpris'd by unjust force, but not enthrall'd;
Yea, even that, which mischief meant most harm,
Shall in the happy trial prove most glory;
But evil on itself shall back recoil,
And mix no more with goodness: when at last
Gather'd like scum, and settled to itself,
It shall be in eternal restless change,
Self-fed, and self-consumed; if this fail,
The pillar'd firmament is rottenness,
And earth's base built on stubble.'

The mind thus consecrated to moral beauty, is stamped with the superscription of the Most High. Like the Puritans, his eye was fixed continually on an Almighty Judge. This was the light that irradiated his darkness, and, early and late, on all sides round,—

'As one great furnace flamed.'

This was the idea, strengthened by vast knowledge and solitary meditation, that absorbed all the rest of his being, and made him the sublimest of men. Hence the poems that rise like temples, and the rhythms that flow like organ chants. Hence the contempt of external circumstances, the purpose that will not bend to opposition nor yield to seduction, the courage to perform a perilous duty and to combat for what is true or sacred. Hence the calm, conscious energy which no subject, howsoever

vast or terrific, can repel or intimidate, which no emotion or accident can transform or disturb, which no suffering can render sullen or fretful. Hence the larger conception of perpetual growth, the consequent reverence for human nature, hatred of the institutions which fetter the mind, devotion to freedom—above all, freedom of speech, of conscience and worship. Parents and friends had destined him for the ministry, but,—

‘Coming to some maturity of years, and perceiving what tyranny had invaded the church, that he who would take orders must subscribe slave, and take an oath withal, which unless he took with a conscience that would retch, he must either straight perjure, or split his faith; I thought it better to prefer a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking, bought and begun with servitude and forswearing.’

Hence, too,—from the endurance of the God-idea, from the fixed determination to live nobly and act grandly,—he preserved his moral ardor intact from the withering and polluting influences of politics, which generally extinguish sentiment and imagination in a sordid and calculating selfishness.

Can we expect humor here?—Only at distant intervals, and then with strange slips into the grotesque, as in the heavy witticisms of the devils on the effect of their artillery. Thus Satan seeing the confusion of the angels, calls to his mates:

‘O Friends, why come not on these victors proud?
Ere while they fierce were coming; and when we
To entertain them fair with open front
And breast (what could we more?) propounded terms
Of composition, straight they changed their minds,
Flew off, and into strange vagaries fell,
As they would dance; yet for a dance they seem’d
Somewhat extravagant and wild.’

And Belial answers:

‘Leader, the terms we sent were terms of weight,
Of hard contents, and full of force urged home,
Such as we might perceive amused them all,
And stumbled many; who receives them right,
Had need from head to foot well understand.’

Naturally, his habits of living were austere. He was an early riser, and abstemious in diet. The lyrist, he thought, might indulge in wine, and in a freer life; but he who would write an epic to the nations, must eat beans and drink water. His amusements consisted in gardening, in exercise with the sword, and in playing on the organ. Music, he insisted, should form part of a generous education. His ear for it was acute; and his voice, it is said, was sweet and harmonious. In youth, handsome to a

proverb, he was called the lady of his college. The simplicity of his later years accorded with his inner greatness. He listened every morning to a chapter from the Hebrew Bible; and, after meditating in silence on what he had heard, studied till mid-day; then, after an hour's exercise, he attuned himself to majesty and purity of thought with music, and resumed his studies till six.

The most devout man of his time, he frequented no place of worship. He was perhaps too dissatisfied with the clashing systems of the age to attach himself to any sect. Finding his ideal in none, he prayed to God alone :

‘Thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples, the upright heart, and pure.’¹

The discovery, in 1823, of his *Treatise on Christian Doctrine* excited considerable amazement by its heterodox opinions. In this he avers himself an anti-Trinitarian, and teaches that the Son is distinct from the Father, inferior to Him, created by Him, and afterwards employed by Him to carry on the creative work. He is opposed, as were most of the ancient philosophers, to the doctrine of creation out of nothing; and maintains that, since there can be no act without a passive material on which the act was exerted, the world was formed out of a preëxistent substance. To the question, What and whence is this primary substance? he answers: It proceeded from God, ‘an efflux of the Deity.’² He differs from the majority, again, in the rejection of infant baptism, and in the assertion that under the Gospel no time is appointed for public worship, but that the observance of the first day of the week rests wholly on expediency and general consent. On two other points he satisfies himself with the prevalent notions,—original sin, and redemption through Christ.

In the order of Providence, the highest and greatest must have more or less sympathy with their age. Hence his controversial asperity. Gentlemen now are expected to dispute with an elegant dignity. In those days, they sought to devour each other, or, failing in this, to cover each other with filth. Some of his offenders deserved no mercy. Salmasius, a hired pedant, disgorges

¹ *Paradise Lost: Invocation.*

² Those who represent, with Macanlay, that Milton asserts the eternity of matter, are in error, as is evident from the following passage, than which nothing could be more explicit: ‘That matter, I say, should have existed from all eternity, is inconceivable. If, on the contrary, it did not exist from all eternity, it is difficult to understand from whence it derives its origin. There remains, therefore, but one solution of the difficulty, for which, moreover, we have the authority of Scripture, namely, that all things are of God.’

upon him a torrent of calumny, and he replies with a dictionary of epithets—rogue, wretch, idiot, ass:

‘You who know so many tongues, who read so many books, who write so much about them, you are yet but an ass.’

Again:

‘O most drivelling of asses, you come ridden by a woman, with the curled heads of bishops whom you had wounded.’

And again:

‘Doubt not that you are reserved for the same end as Judas, and that, driven by despair rather than repentance, self-disgusted, you must one day hang yourself, and like your rival burst asunder in your belly.’

Such passages every admirer of Milton must lament. When interests of infinite moment are at stake, the deeply moved soul will speak strongly. The general strain of his prose, however, must exalt him, notwithstanding its occasional violence; but in the more congenial sphere of poetry, he ever appears in the serene strength, the sedate patience, which was proper to him.

To the manners and spirit of his age, as well as to his severe sanctitude, is due his conception of female excellence and the relative position of the sexes:

‘Not equal, as their sex not equal seem’d:
For contemplation he and valour form’d,
For softness she and sweet attractive grace;
He for God only, she for God in him.
His fair large front and eye sublime declared
Absolute rule; and hyacinthine locks
Round from his parted forelock manly hung
Clust’ring, but not beneath his shoulders broad:
She, as a veil down to the slender waist,
Her unadorned golden tresses wore
Dishevell’d, but in wanton ringlets waved
As the vine curls her tendrils; which imply’d
Subjection, but required with gentle sway,
And by her yielded, by him best received;
Yielded with coy submission, modest pride,
And sweet reluctant amorous delay.’¹

Milton’s heart lived in a sublime solitude. Disappointed of a companionship there, he regarded the actual woman with something of condescension, and, incapable of those attentions which make companionship sweet, probably exacted a studious respect. As for sensibility and tenderness, it was essential to his perfectness that the nature should be quiet. A great mind is master of its enthusiasm,—the less perturbed, the closer its resemblance to

¹*Paradise Lost, IV: Adam and Eve.*

the Divine. Its emotion, though more intense and enduring than that of other men, is calmer, and therefore less observed. We have seen what susceptibility breathes in Milton's early poetry,—not light or gay, indeed, but always healthful and bright. And later, in his essay on *Education*, he says:

'In those vernal seasons of the year when the air is calm and pleasant, it were an injury and sullenness against Nature not to go out and see her riches, and partake in her rejoicing with heaven and earth.'

When old, tried, and sightless, he could turn from the stormy scenery of the infernal regions, and luxuriate in the loveliness of Paradise, the innocent joy of its inhabitants. There is no mistaking the fine sense of beauty and the pure deep affection of these exquisite lines, which the gentle Eve addresses to her lover in the 'shady bowers' of Eden:

'Neither breath of Morn, when she ascends
With charm of earliest birds; nor rising Sun
On this delightful land; nor herb, fruit, flower,
Glist'ring with dew; nor fragrance after showers;
Nor grateful ev'ning mild; nor silent Night
With this her solemn bird, nor walk by Moon,
Or glitt'ring star-light, without thee is sweet.'

An Independent in politics and religion, a hero, a martyr, a recluse, a dweller in an ideal city, standing alone and aloof above his times, and, when eyes of flesh were sightless, wandering the more 'where the Muses haunt,'—truly—

'Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart.'

Influence.—Such men are sent as soldiers of humanity. They use the sacred fire, divinely kindled within them, not to amuse men or to build up a reputation, but to awaken kindred greatness in other souls. What service Milton has rendered to mankind by his love of freedom and the high, brave morals he taught! On account of the learning necessary to their full comprehension, his works will never be popular in the sense in which those of Shakespeare are so, or Bunyan, or Burns, or even Pope and Cowper; but, like the *Organum*, they move the intellects which move the world. As culture spreads and approaches their spiritual heights, the more they will reveal their efficacy to purify, invigorate, and delight; the more will man aspire to emulate the zeal, the fortitude, the virtue, the toil, the heroism, of their author.

It is a Chinese maxim, that 'a sage is the instructor of a hun-

dred ages.' Talk much with such a one, and you acquire his quality,—the habit of looking at things as he. From him proceeds mental and moral force, will he or not. He is of those who make a period, as well as mark it; who, without ceasing to help us as a cause, help us also as an effect; who reach so high, that age and comparison cannot rob them of power to inspire; who turn, by their moral alchemy,

'The common dust
Of servile opportunity to gold,
Filling the soul with sentiments august,
The beautiful, the brave, the holy, and the just.'

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